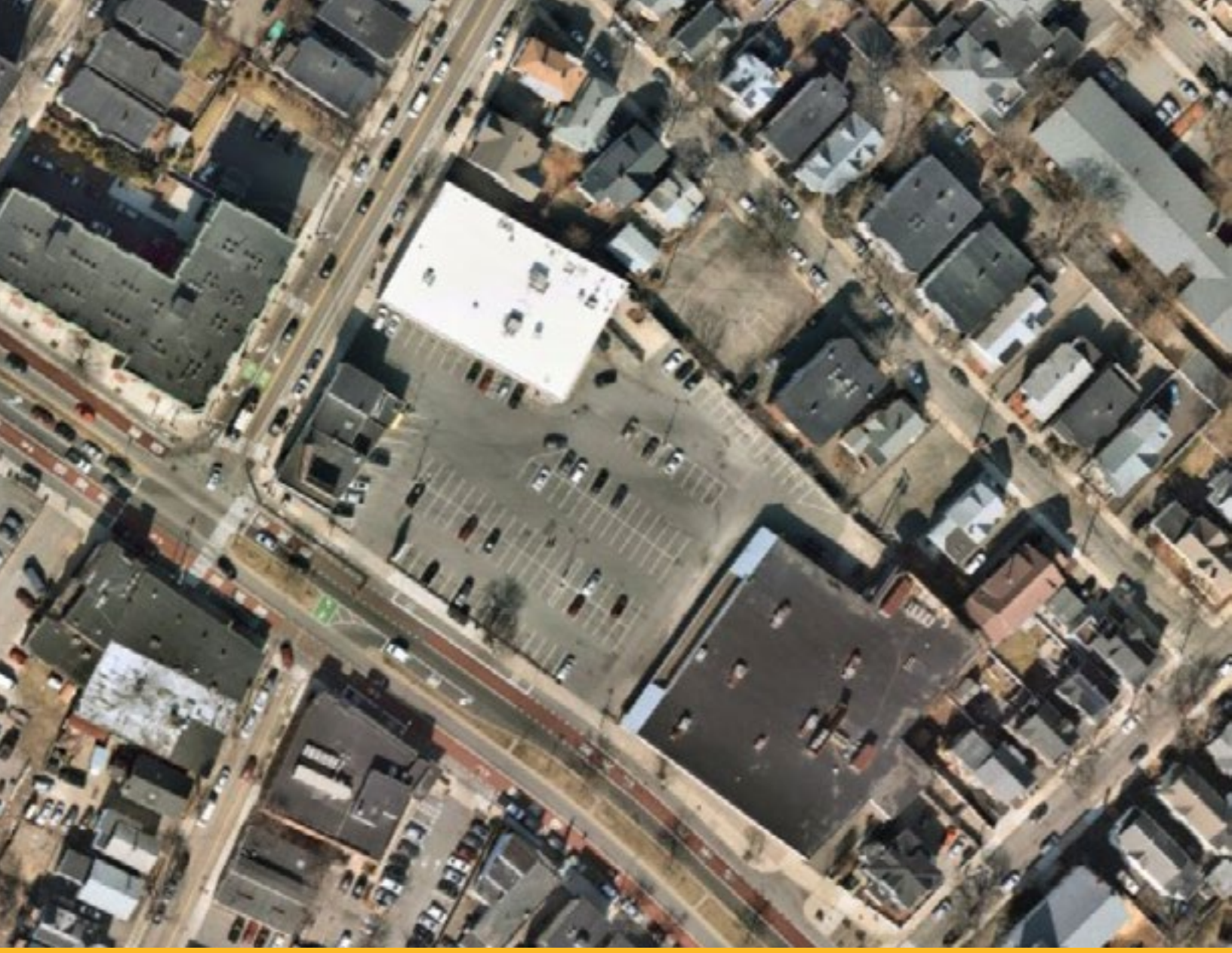

WINTER HILL
URBAN RENEWAL PLAN

The City of Somerville
[Month] [Year]

DRAFT

The City of Somerville, MA
Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development
Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor

Submitted to:
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Housing and Community Development
under M.G.L. Chapter 121B
as an "Urban Renewal Plan"

DRAFT

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12.02(1) Executive Summary

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In November 2016, the City of Somerville Planning Board adopted the Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan ("Neighborhood Plan"), which laid out the community's vision for the Winter Hill neighborhood. The Neighborhood Plan envisions a commercial corridor that is restored as a main street destination, one that is safe and inviting for pedestrians and bikers and supported by mixed-use development. It calls for increasing access to fresh produce, improving the public realm, reclaiming wasted space, and exploring models of district management. Ultimately, the Winter Hill commercial corridor will be an area known for its convenient and independent businesses, storied history, and easy access by any transit mode; it will build on its existing identity as a place where people of all kinds feel welcome and comfortable to gather, shop, and play.

Today there remain several major obstacles to the realization of this vision. The heart of the neighborhood is extremely auto-dependent, with the corridor dominated by wide swaths of asphalt, curb cuts, and a pedestrian experience that leaves much to be desired. One of the biggest frustrations, however, is the Temple Square site, a 2.8 acre area that is the Project Area for this Plan. The Project Area includes a Star Market that has been vacant since 2007 and two decrepit, vacant parking lots, in addition to three other buildings and a private right of way. For over ten years, the Winter Hill community has had to contend with this underutilized property at the heart of their neighborhood, as well as the trash and crime it has invited.

The Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan was adopted in November 2016.

The continued neglect of this property represents a major disservice to the neighborhood. Despite the Neighborhood Plan's clear vision for the Project Area, and despite the area's location in one of the strongest real estate markets in the region, the property sits underutilized, year after year. Over ten years of the status quo has demonstrated that private action is not sufficient to redevelop the Project Area, and that without public intervention the property will continue to languish in its current format. Winter Hill's residents, a diverse population, deserve better.

This Winter Hill Urban Renewal Plan ("Plan" or "Urban Renewal Plan") intends to implement a portion of the Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan and help make the community vision a reality. The authorizing statute for the Winter Hill Urban

A photo of the vacant Star Market taken in July 2020.

Renewal Plan is Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 121B, which empowers the Somerville Redevelopment Authority ("SRA") to characterize the Project Area as a "Decadent Area" and prepare an Urban Renewal Plan for its redevelopment. A renewal plan under Chapter 121B provides certain powers to local communities, acting through their redevelopment authority, including the ability to acquire and dispose of designated properties. Over the course of several community meetings in 2019 and 2020, the community has made clear that they would like the City to use these powers in order to resolve these long-standing issues in the neighborhood. This planning tool—which has been successful in transforming Assembly Square and laying the foundation for future development in Union Square—is a necessary strategy for implementing key portions of the Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan. The SRA will acquire, assemble, and dispose of properties within the Project Area in order to redevelop decadent land into green open space, commercial, and residential uses that will bring the community's vision to life.

In addition to supporting the needs of the surrounding neighborhood, the Winter Hill Urban Renewal Plan also supports the goals of Somerville and the Commonwealth. This Plan conforms not only to the goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan, SomerVision, but also to its values of protecting diversity, fostering the unique character of Temple Square, bringing more jobs to the neighborhood, supporting a better streetscape for all transit modes, and creating more housing within walking distance of transit. Furthermore, the Plan also conforms to and promotes all ten of the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development principles by promoting pedestrian-oriented, multimodal, mixed-use

development and increasing green space.

The chapters in this Plan are organized to follow the sections in the Housing and Urban Renewal regulations set forth in 760 CMR 12.02(1) through 12.02(15).

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

This Plan has six Objectives, which are drawn from the Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan and detailed more fully in the Objectives chapter.

Improve Winter Hill's identity as a neighborhood-oriented main street commercial district. Although the neighborhood currently boasts fantastic independent businesses, these establishments face rising rents and struggle to attract customers from beyond the neighborhood. Since the grocery store closed, the business offerings in the neighborhood are not a diverse enough mix to meet all of a household's needs, which increases the chances of residents spending their money in other districts instead. Bringing in additional commercial development, residents, and an improved streetscape will support existing businesses and re-establish Winter Hill as a main street commercial district.

Create green and open gathering spaces to support community life and the environment. Winter Hill has a dearth of green and open space, particularly in the heart of the Broadway commercial district. Massive parking lots take up much of the acreage instead, contributing to urban heat island effect, stormwater management issues, and the continued over reliance on cars. Establishing a green space in the heart of the district at Temple Square will not only mitigate these environmental issues, but generate welcoming space for the neighborhood's residents to gather within their neighborhood.

Ensure a pedestrian- and bike-friendly experience. Although progress has been made in improving the walkability and bikeability of this neighborhood since the adoption of the Neighborhood Plan, additional and more transformative work must be done to create a safe and inviting space for all modes of transit. Redevelopment that minimizes curb cuts and an improved streetscape will be essential to meet the Neighborhood Plan's vision. This is particularly important given the MBTA Green Line Extension service to Gilman Square in late 2021, wherein the district will likely see more visitors arriving on foot or bike from the transit station.

Minimize displacement by building additional affordable housing. Somerville, much like the Greater Boston region, continues to face a housing crisis as rents rise and families must crowd into small units or else be displaced entirely. The redevelopment of Temple Square into a mixed-use project with hundreds of housing units—and at least 20% of these affordable—will provide much-needed housing. An added bonus is the proximity of this housing to the

Gilman Square Green Line Station, which can provide affordable transportation access throughout Somerville and into downtown Boston. Infill projects such as this are essential in promoting the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development goals to expand housing opportunities to meet the needs of people of all abilities, income levels, and household types.

Pursue redevelopment that produces equitable outcomes in the neighborhood. Winter Hill is a diverse neighborhood that many people of different incomes, races, ethnicities, and national origins call home. The arrival of the Green Line station, while increasing the transportation opportunities for the neighborhoods, will also likely raise rents and housing prices beyond the reach of many current residents. Businesses may also see changing tastes in the neighborhoods, increased rents, and, in some cases, their buildings sold. Creating additional housing and commercial supply can, if done carefully, work as an anti-displacement strategy. However, this goal must be part of the vision from the outset. Continued data analysis to determine the effects of development described in this Plan should explore how this project ultimately benefits or burdens different communities within the neighborhood.

Redevelop vacant and underutilized properties into uses that better meet community needs. Right now, the center of the Broadway commercial district is a vacant, decrepit site that contributes little to the surrounding community. Winter Hill residents deserve better. Redeveloping the site will transform this dilapidated site into one that supports important community goals relating to housing, green space, and jobs.

PROJECT AREA

The urban renewal area ("Project Area") is one site, consisting of six parcels and 2.8 acres, known as Temple Square. This site was identified in the Neighborhood Plan as a pivotal one and encompasses the vacant Star Market building, two decrepit lots on Sewall Street, a private right of way called Sewall Court, the existing Walgreens building, and two buildings at the corner of Temple St and Broadway.

An aerial image of the Project Area

The SRA proposes these parcels as the urban renewal area because they represent some of the most decadent and hazardous conditions in the city. Furthermore, after thirteen years of the Star Market's vacancy, despite its location in one of the hottest real estate markets in New England, the community is frustrated. Ninety percent of the residents surveyed supported taking the Star Market property.

The Neighborhood Plan identifies additional properties that the SRA and City staff considered for inclusion in the plan: Whitcomb Place (which houses a

CareWell Urgent Care and the Winter Hill Bank Loan Center, as well as a vacant former pharmacy) and Brewery Block (parcels of parking alongside Winter Hill Brewery). However, the SRA decided to focus its efforts on Temple Square for now because it has represented such an egregious example of decadence in the neighborhood and the community has requested immediate action.

IMPLEMENTATION

This Plan will have a duration of 10 years upon the City Council's approval of the Plan.

Table 1:1 - Implementation Time Frame

D1: Sewall Commons	D2: Sewall Lot	D3: Temple Square	Other
Short Term Tasks (1-3 Years)			
SRA acquires and subdivides this site. SRA conveys the site to the City of Somerville for development into a park. Funding sources located. Project permitting begins.	SRA acquires and subdivides this site. SRA conveys the site to a mission-driven affordable housing developer to develop the site into affordable housing. Project permitting begins.	The Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) is established. Community meetings about the redevelopment of Temple Square are held. Shortlist of preferred developers identified through Request for Qualifications process. Developer selected through Request for Proposals process. Exclusive negotiation and development of a land disposition agreement begin. Developer takes the site and project permitting begins.	
Mid-Term Tasks (3-7 Years)			
	Possible construction completion.	Disposition of property to selected developer; construction begins.	City completes the design of subsurface infrastructure.
Long-Term Tasks (7-10 Years)			
Possible construction completion.		Possible construction completion.	City's subsurface infrastructure work is complete. City's streetscape improvements begin.

12.02(2) Characteristics

A: PROJECT AREA BOUNDARIES

The area designated for renewal under this Plan (the "Project Area") encompasses the Temple Square site as originally imagined in the Neighborhood Plan. The area is six parcels approximately 2.8 acres in total, and encompasses four buildings, one of which is vacant. The entire Project Area, depicted in Map A:1, is located within the Winter Hill neighborhood, abutting its central thoroughfare, Broadway. Specifically, the Project Area includes the following parcels:

- 70-D-5
- Sewall Court (which does not have an assessor's number associated with it)
- 70-D-10 (which was consumed by parcel 70-D-27, but still appears separately on some parcel maps)
- 70-D-27
- 70-D-24
- 70-D-25

The Project Area is a short walk—less than a half mile—to the site of the future Gilman Square station, which is scheduled to open at the end of 2021 (see Maps A:2 and A:3). It is situated between the commercial district along Broadway, a major thoroughfare in Temple St, and the residential fabric of the neighborhood.

B: EXISTING PROPERTY LINES AND THE FOOTPRINT OF BUILDINGS, EXISTING AND PROPOSED

The Project Area includes six parcels and four existing buildings, described in Table 2:1 and depicted in Map B:1. One parcel visible in Map B:1, 70-D-10, has been consumed by 70-D-27; although these parcels are separated in some maps, they are legally the same parcel. Sewall Court is a private right-of-way; it is currently used for parking.

The SRA intends to redivide the parcels into three areas, as depicted in Map B:2. In the proposed reuse of the property, the two lots along Sewall St and Sewall Ct will be subdivided at the point of their retaining walls into two new parcels, D1 and D2, and the remaining Project Area will be consolidated into what is described in Map B:2 as D3. D1 will become a public open space, with the expectation that a future redevelopment on D3 would create a throughway between the public open space and Broadway. D2 will become a new housing

development matching the scale of the buildings already situated on Sewall St. The SRA intends to work with local mission-driven affordable housing developers.

The remainder of the project area, D3, will be redeveloped in conjunction with a private developer. The redevelopment will include housing, including affordable units, ground floor commercial space, and publicly accessible green open space, but the exact building footprints and design would be dependent on the community-driven developer selection process (see Citizen Participation chapter). However, a version adapted from the Neighborhood Plan, which provided an estimated 200 housing units and 28,000 square feet of commercial space, is depicted in Map B:2 to demonstrate one possible layout.

Table 2:1 - Existing Buildings

Map B:2 Legend	Address Map-Block-Lot	Owner	Existing Use (Current Tenants)	Year Built	Building Area (in Sq Ft)
A	299 Broadway 70-D-27	COHEN H A TRUSTEE C/O SHAWS and COMAR R E TRUST - JIM COHEN	Vacant Commercial (None)	1967	31,482
B	15 Temple St 70-D-5	COHEN H A TRUSTEE	Commercial and Residential (Walgreens)	1970	16,800
C	9 Temple St 70-D-25	PRIVITERA PHILLIP J TRUSTEE and 9 TEMPLE ST REALTY TRUST	Commercial / Residential (Elegancia Salon, 2 residential units)	1940[1]	3,772
D	313 Broadway 70-D-24	HOWARD J W TRUSTEE and 313 BROADWAY REALTY TRUST	Commercial (Winter Hill Liquors, Brazilian Times)	1910	10,703

C: EXISTING USES AND CURRENT ZONING

Map C:1 depicts the existing uses on the site. The overwhelming majority of the land area in the Project Area is currently pavement and parking. Three commercial

1 Staff suspects that, based on architectural details, the building may be older.

buildings sit in the area—the Walgreens, the Winter Hill Liquors and Brazilian Times Office, and the vacant Star Market site—and one mixed-use building, which houses the Elegancia Salon on the bottom floor and two residential units on the second floor.

Map C:2 illustrates the current zoning for the site. As described further in Objectives, the City of Somerville City Council voted to adopt a zoning code overhaul in December 2019. This zoning code allows for Mid-Rise 5 along Broadway, then drops down to Mid-Rise 3 and ultimately Neighborhood Residential along Sewall Street. The Mid-Rise districts of Somerville are characterized by a variety of moderate floor plate buildings, with Mid-Rise 3 allowing up to three stories and Mid-Rise 5 allowing up to five stories. The Zoning Code further characterizes the Mid-Rise districts: "Buildings are set close to the sidewalk to create a defined street wall that supports pedestrian activity and a sense of place. The district is primarily commercial, with ground story uses that typically address the needs of residents and employees in the immediate neighborhood." Neighborhood Residential, meanwhile, is characterized by small and moderate floor plates with one-, two-, and three-unit principal buildings. These buildings are almost entirely residential, with occasional neighborhood stores, schools, places of worship and arts-related uses.

Map C:3 is the portion of the Somerville Zoning Ordinance which identifies Pedestrian Streets. Both Broadway and Temple St, which are boundaries of the Project Area, are designated Pedestrian Streets. Such a designation requires that development meet additional standards to make the street more pedestrian friendly. These requirements include ground story commercial space for the total width of the building (excluding lobbies for upper stories, means of egress, and any building system rooms), no curb cuts, and uses that activate the streetscape. Furthermore, the only allowed uses in ground floor commercial space lining a pedestrian street are Arts & Creative Enterprise, Food & Beverage Service, Retail, and Civic & Institutional. Any development in the Project Area will need to take into account these requirements for buildings that front along these streets.

D: PROPOSED LAND USES, PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Map D:1 illustrates the proposed land uses in the Project Area. This Plan calls for the creation of a public open space on D1 and a neighborhood-scale affordable housing development on D2. The rest of the Project Area, D3, is proposed to be redeveloped into several buildings with commercial on the ground floor, residential above, and a publicly accessible thoroughfare from the Sewall Street public open space to Broadway.

Map D:2 displays the sewer and stormwater system in the immediate vicinity. The combined sewer and stormwater system along Broadway requires substantial improvements, including separating the stormwater from the sewer system. Such an improvement is required before development can be completed (see Public Improvements for details). The exact geographic scope of this work will be determined following additional research and planning.

Once the improvements of the subsurface infrastructure are complete, the City will also pursue streetscape improvements along Broadway from McGrath Highway to Magoun Square, as depicted in Map D:3.

E: ALL THOROUGHFARES, PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND EASEMENTS, EXISTING AND PROPOSED

Map E:1 depicts the existing thoroughfares and public rights of way surrounding the Project Area. Sewall Ct is a paper street, a private right of way that is currently used for parking. The only proposed change is that, once the Sewall Commons lot becomes a public open space and the D3 parcel is developed, there would be a route from Sewall St to Broadway accessible to pedestrians and bikers. The exact design of such an access route would be dependent on the community process for the disposition of D3.

F: PARCELS TO BE ACQUIRED

Map F:1 displays the parcels to be acquired. In total, there are six, described in detail in the Acquisitions chapter.

G: LOTS TO BE CREATED FOR DISPOSITION

Map G:1 illustrates the three parcels to be created for disposition. D3 will be the site of a development project featuring commercial, residential, and green open space, subject to the community process described in the Citizen Participation section. D1 will be conveyed to the City to turn it into a public open space, and D2 will be conveyed to a mission-driven developer for development into affordable housing.

H: BUILDINGS TO BE DEMOLISHED

Map H:1 illustrates the four buildings to be demolished as a part of this Plan.

I: BUILDINGS TO BE REHABILITATED

Map I:1 illustrates the existing buildings in the Project Area, but none will be

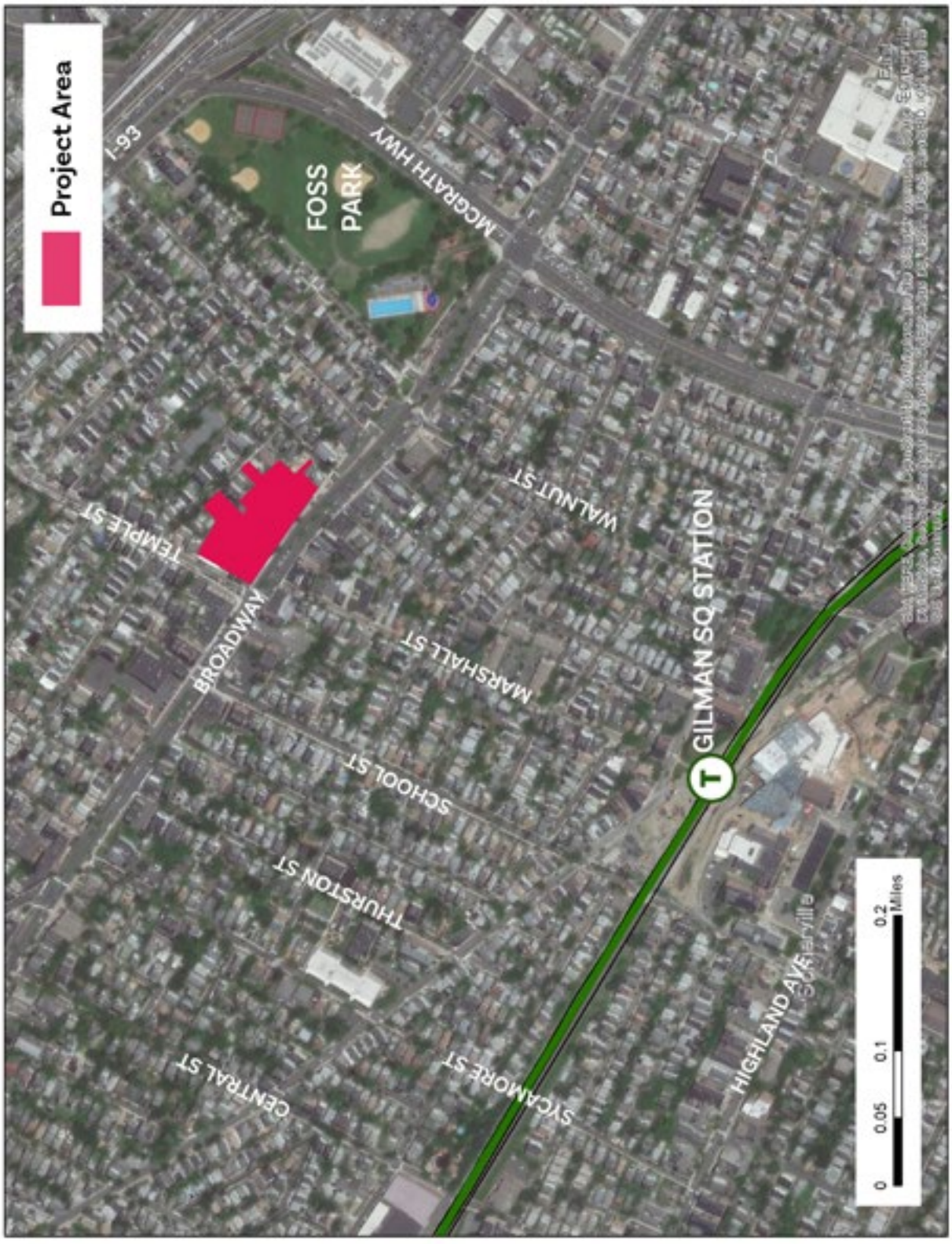
rehabilitated as all will be demolished.

J: BUILDINGS TO BE CONSTRUCTED

Map J:1 provides possible footprints for the proposed new buildings to be constructed as a part of this Plan. The SRA will convey D2 to a mission-driven affordable housing developer for the purpose of building affordable housing consistent with the surrounding residences. D3 will be conveyed do a developer subject to the community process identified in the Citizen Participation section, but the Neighborhood Plan calls for a commercial and residential development broken into several buildings and a site plan that provides a substantial amount of public open space for the use of the community. The site will also include an access from Sewall Street to Broadway for pedestrians and bikers through D1, which will be conveyed to the City for creating into open space.

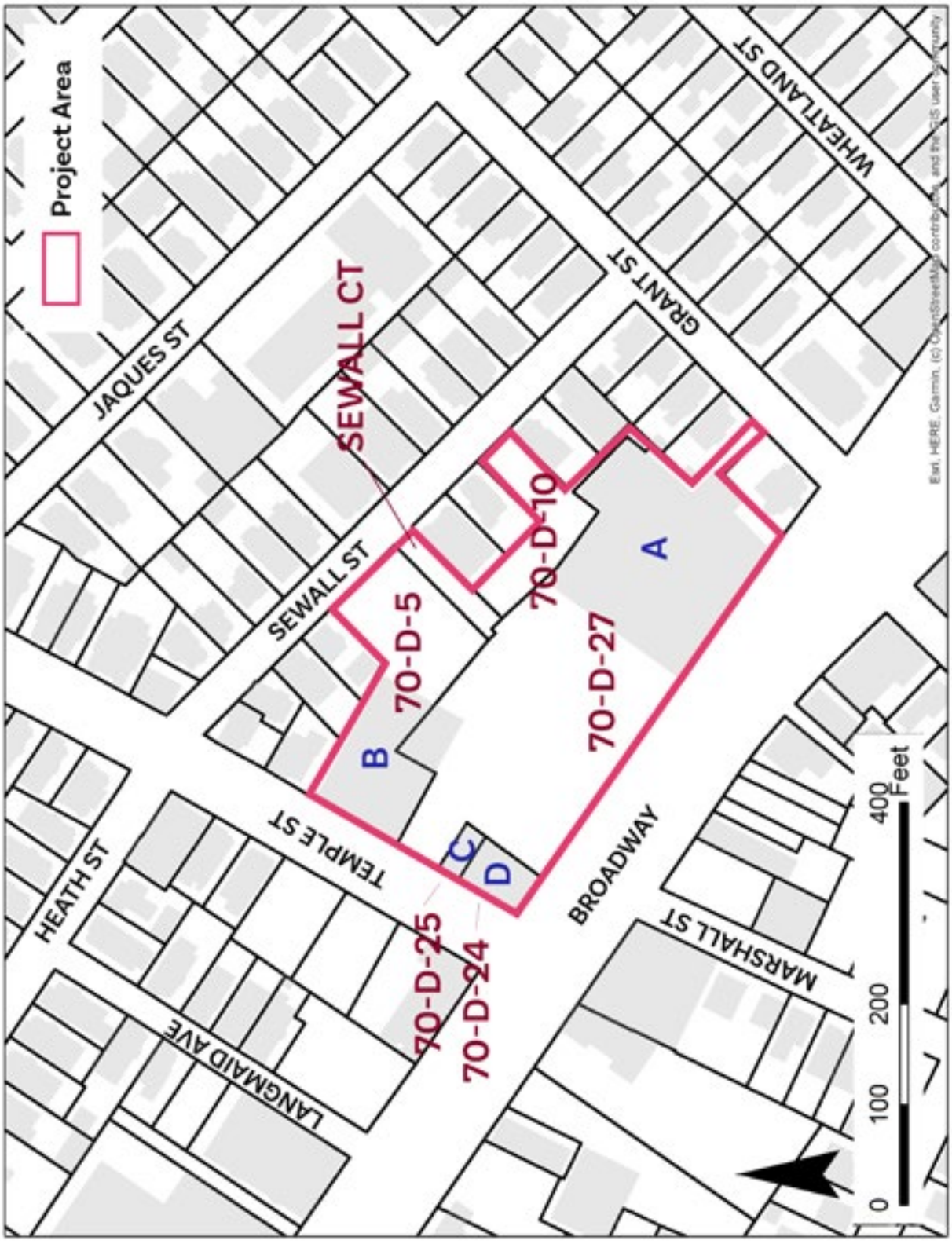
MAP A:1 - PROJECT AREA BOUNDARIES

MAP A:2 - NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

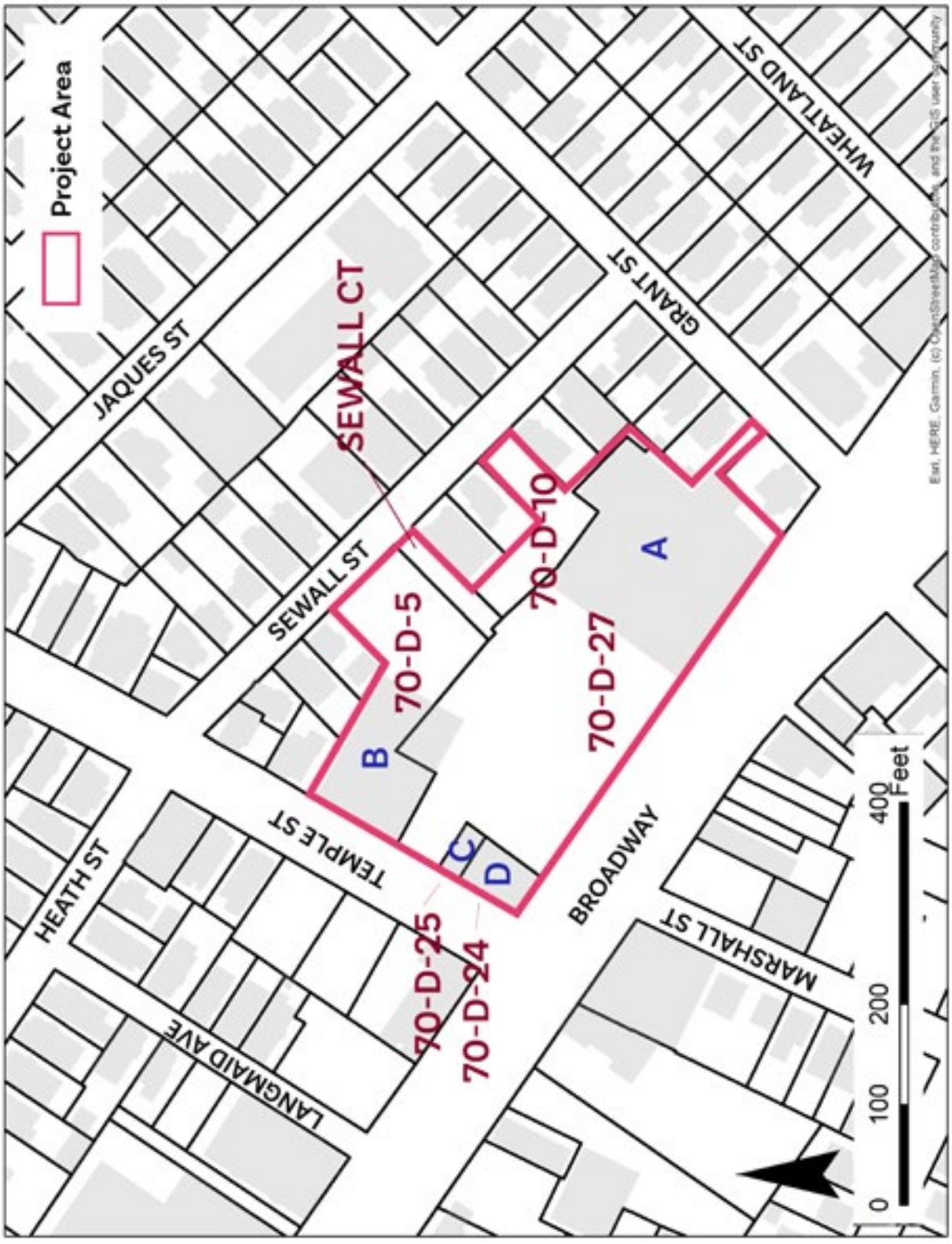


MAP A:3 -NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

MAP B:1 - EXISTING PROPERTY LINES AND BUILDINGS



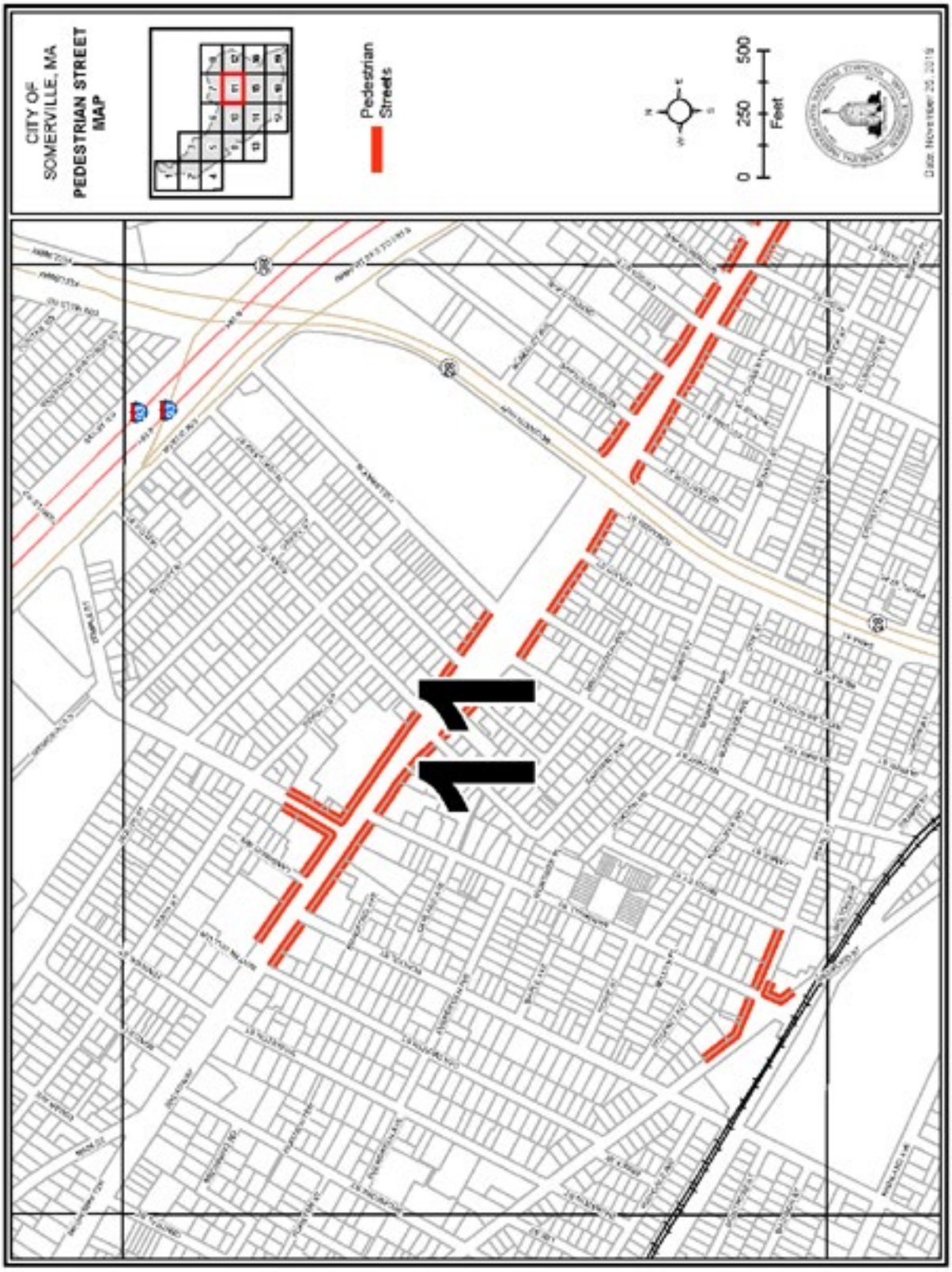
MAP B-2: PROPOSED PROPERTY LINES & BUILDINGS



MAP C:1 - EXISTING USES

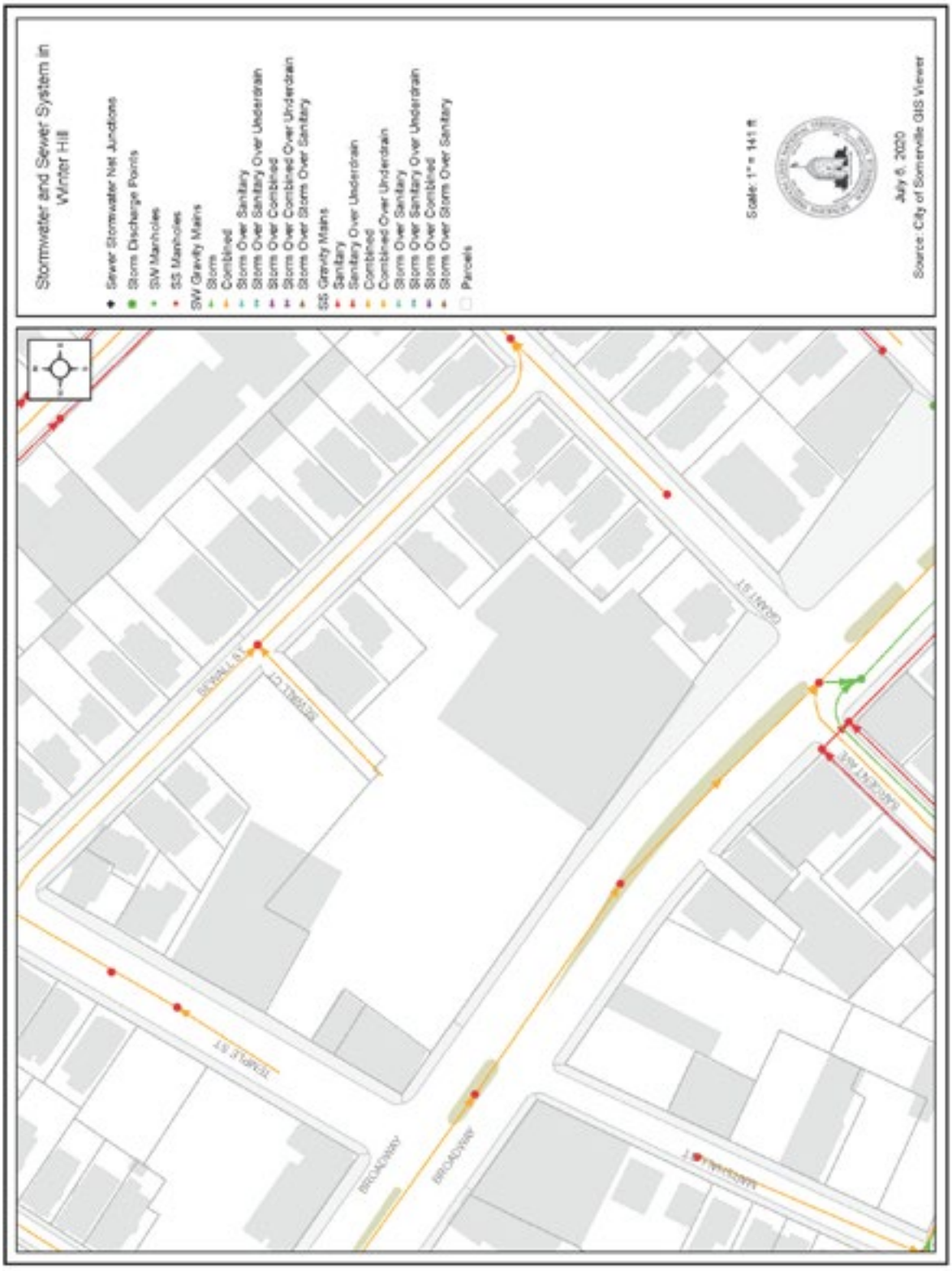
MAP C:2 - CURRENT ZONING

MAP C:3 - PEDESTRIAN STREET DESIGNATIONS



MAP D:1 - PROPOSED LAND USES

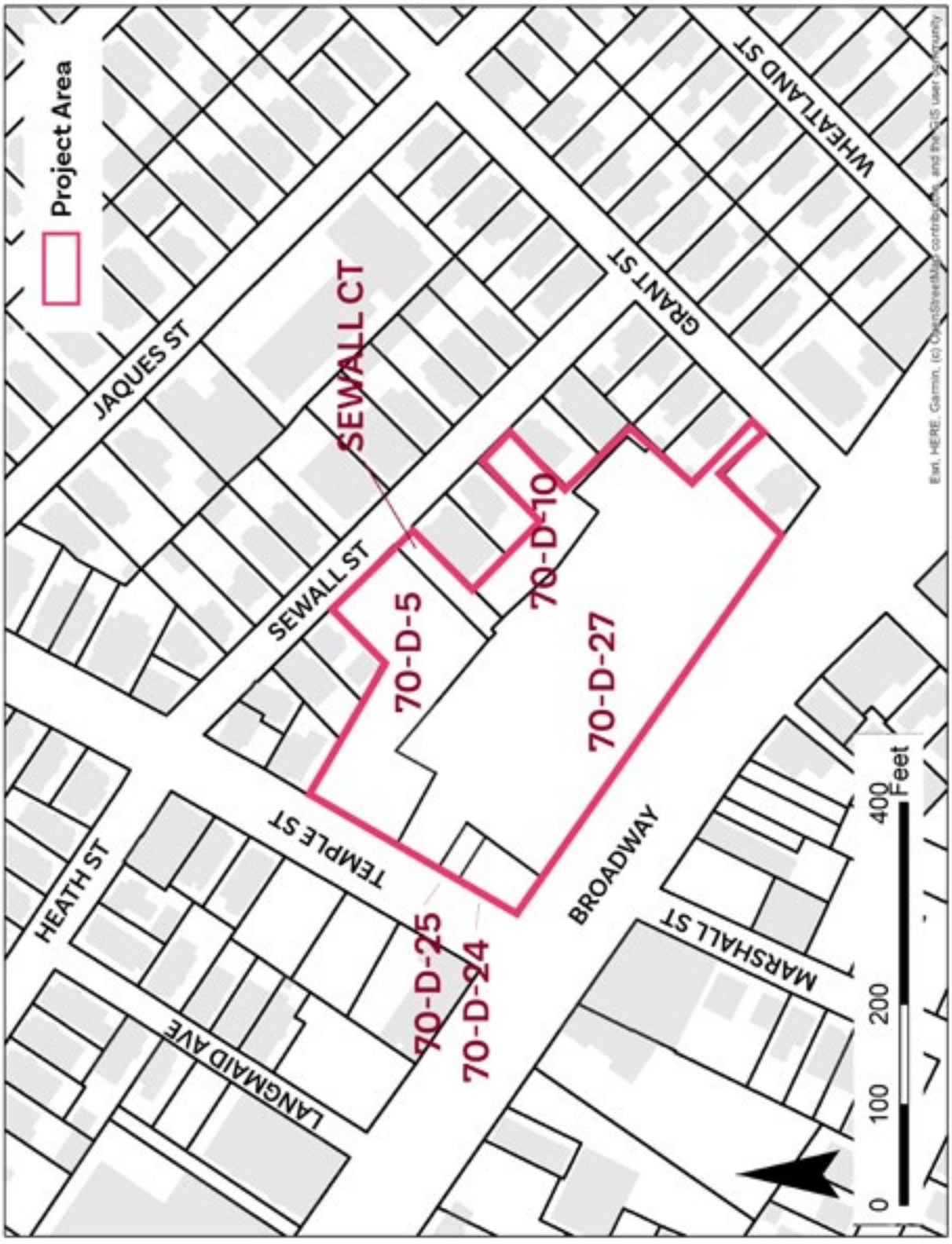
MAP D:2 - STORMWATER AND SEWER SYSTEM



MAP D:3 - STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT AREA

MAP E:1 - EXISTING AND PROPOSED RIGHTS OF WAY

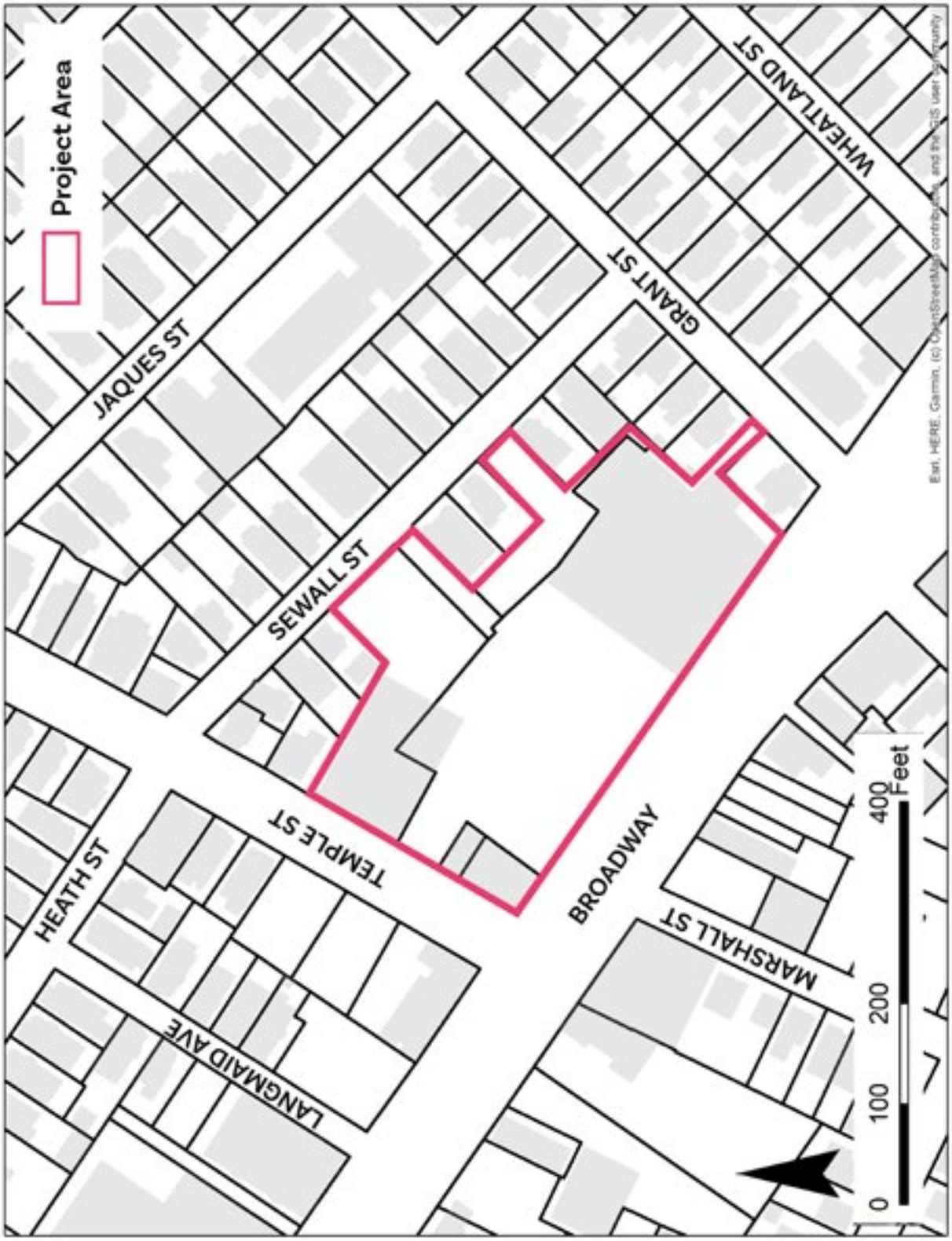
MAP F:1 - PARCELS TO BE ACQUIRED



MAP G:1 - LOTS TO BE CREATED FOR DISPOSITION

MAP H:1 - BUILDINGS TO BE DEMOLISHED

MAP I:1 - BUILDINGS TO BE REHABILITATED



MAP J:1 - BUILDINGS TO BE CONSTRUCTED

12.02(3) Eligibility

INTRODUCTION

This section of the Plan provides both general information about the Project Area, the Winter Hill neighborhood, and planning efforts in Somerville as well as specific information about the eligibility of the Project Area for urban renewal. To approve a proposed urban renewal plan, DHCD must make the following six findings:

- Without public involvement, the area would not be (re)developed;
- The proposed projects will enhance/promote private reinvestment;
- The plan for financing the project is sound;
- The designated project area is a decadent, substandard or blighted open area;
- The Urban Revitalization Plan is complete; and
- The Relocation Plan is approved under M.G.L. c. 79A.

This chapter demonstrates through data and photographic evidence that the Project Area meets the eligibility criteria to be categorized as decadent within the definitions of M.G.L. c. 121B, section 1.

HISTORY OF WINTER HILL

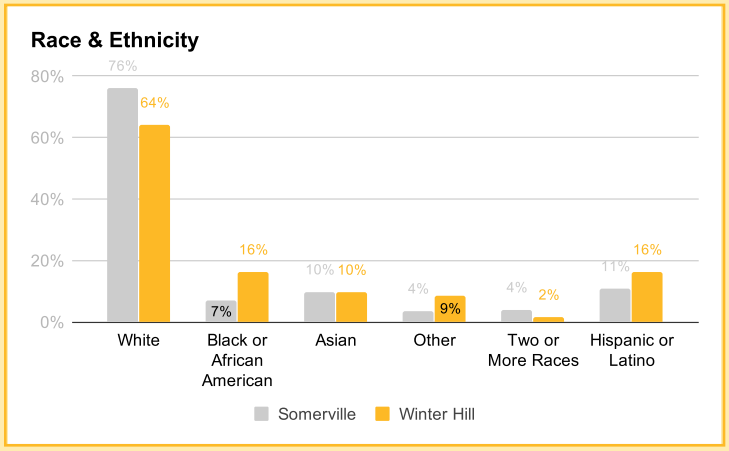
Somerville is a small city with a land area of 4.1 square miles. It is located in the Boston metropolitan core and shares boundaries with Boston, Cambridge, Arlington, and Medford. Somerville has approximately 81,000 residents, 2,000 businesses, and 35,000 jobs. It is a city with many squares and commercial districts, including the Winter Hill Broadway district.

The land now known as Somerville was purchased by the English in 1639 from a Pawtucket Confederation chief known as Squaw Sachem. Her people had been decimated by European diseases, encroachment of Puritans onto her people's land, and hostile tribes throughout New England.

An 1829 Map by John G. Hales with Winter Hill labeled, prior to the formation of Somerville.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF WINTER HILL

A DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOOD



- 37% of Winter Hill residents were born outside of the US, compared to 27% of Somerville residents. Foreign-born residents in the neighborhood are predominantly from Central America, Asia, South America, and the Caribbean.
- Winter Hill has a higher share of Black and Latinx residents than Somerville as a whole.
- In the Winter Hill neighborhood, households on the northeastern side of Broadway have a median income of $58,298, while those on the southwestern side have a median income of $94,907. Somerville as a whole has a median income of $91,168.

A FAMILY-ORIENTED NEIGHBORHOOD

- Nearly 60% of Winter Hill households are family-based, compared to 41% in Somerville.
- A higher share of Winter Hill households are owner-occupied, 39% compared to 34% citywide.
- Winter Hill has a higher share of children under 18 (17% of population) than Somerville as a whole (11%) and fewer young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 (10% in Winter Hill, 14% in Somerville).

OUTREACH CONSIDERATIONS

- 10% of households in Winter Hill do not speak English very well. Of these households, 17% speak Spanish, 63% speak another Indo-European language besides Spanish, and 20% speak an Asian and Pacific Islander language.
- 11% of Winter Hill residents do not have access to the Internet at home.

Note: For the purposes of these statistics, Winter Hill is defined as two census tracts that roughly match the City's neighborhood boundary: 3501.04 and 3502. The source of the data is the American Community Survey 2018, 5-Year Estimates. There are limitations to this data: the U.S. Census Bureau tends to undercount communities of color, immigrants, and people who do not speak English fluently. In addition, the small geographic size of the census tracts used in this analysis means that possible error in the data is higher.

1932 photography of Broadway. The Capitol Theater sign in the center is approximately the site of the Project Area.

She allied with the English in exchange for protection and sold a portion of her territory, which included Somerville. It was during this time period of the 1630s that Broadway, the central corridor through the Urban Renewal Area, was first established as Winter Hill Road. The surrounding area housed dairy farms throughout the 1700s and early 1800s, and is one of the first named neighborhoods in Somerville, even predating Somerville becoming its own entity.

Winter Hill's evolution as a neighborhood has been largely affected by transportation modes. In 1841, the Boston and Lowell Railroad brought rail service through the neighborhood. In 1858, a horse car line was established that linked Winter Hill to Charlestown and Boston, which encouraged additional residential development. Soon after, gas and water infrastructure would arrive to service this residential development. By 1895 there were numerous residences, churches, civic buildings, and even a Pickle Works. At around this time, passenger rail and electric trolley service began serving the area.

The turn of the century would ultimately lead to more auto-centric planning, however. In 1925, the completion of McGrath Highway established a permanent barrier between Winter Hill and East Somerville. By the World War II era, nearly all planning was focused on moving cars efficiently. Trolley service was suspended in 1958 and Broadway was dedicated solely to cars. A few years later, in 1965, construction started on Interstate 93, which makes the northeastern border of the Winter Hill neighborhood. These changes coincided with the decline of many of the local businesses. Whereas Broadway had historically supported shoe stores, luxury movie theaters, car dealerships, grocers, an ice cream shop, and many other businesses, many of these disappeared as the neighborhood evolved.

Furthermore, this style of auto-centric planning has contributed to a wide range of health problems. Vehicular emissions, particularly from high-volume routes like I-93 and Broadway, release ultrafine particulates (UFP) into the atmosphere.

Research links UFP with an increased risk for diseases caused by inflammation like heart disease, respiratory disease, and neurological health conditions. This is of particular concern for the Project Area since it is only a quarter-mile away from I-93 and directly abuts Broadway, which sees well over 19,000 vehicle trips per day on average. Many of its buildings are old enough that they may not have the mechanical ventilation systems necessary to filter out air pollution. In addition to pollution, auto-centric planning discourages residents and workers to travel by active modes like walking or bike riding, which can confer the health benefits of exercise as people go about their days.

WINTER HILL TODAY

Winter Hill is poised to return to its transit-oriented heyday with the arrival of a new Green Line Station in Gilman Square, at the intersection of Medford Street and Pearl Street. The Gilman Square station will be an 8-minute walk and only four-tenths of a mile from Broadway and the heart of Winter Hill. This station will improve the connections between Winter Hill and other Somerville neighborhoods, as well as the broader MBTA network. So far, however, the promise of this future station has not been enough to spur the kind of economic activity necessary to support a bustling main streets district. Winter Hill has not been able to achieve its potential as a commercial district since its pivot towards car-centric development, and it will need support in order to take full advantage of the new transportation.

There are many historic independent businesses as well as a few more recent establishments lining the Broadway corridor, but these are also accompanied by visible storefront vacancies. A report prepared by Urban Advisors in 2014 highlighted numerous barriers for retailer success in Winter Hill. A key take away from this research is that the area has poor retail aggregation; businesses do not necessarily complement each other in uses, and the experience for a shopper to patronize multiple destinations in one trip is unwelcoming. For example, someone running an errand at a pharmacy might choose to swing by a bakery that is nearby or is a pleasant walk away, but probably won't if the journey feels perilous or inconvenient. A person who lives within walking distance of the business district might also opt to drive to a district with more options rather than brave the unfriendly pedestrian environment at all.

In addition, residents have articulated an interest in bringing a grocery use back to the neighborhood. The Star Market site has remained vacant for thirteen years, and residents feel that fresh produce is not immediately convenient. Unfortunately, the size and state of the vacant Star Market is unlikely to attract another grocery tenant. According to market analysis cited in the Neighborhood Plan, the neighborhood is saturated by groceries already, with two others within a half-mile. However, the addition of new housing units in the district may be enough to compel the return of a grocery use to the district if the potential demand is great

enough for a store to compete.

Another key shortcoming in Winter Hill is the quality and availability of public open space. Winter Hill does house Foss Park, the biggest open space in Somerville. Its pool and recreational fields are important gathering spaces for the community, including for the Central and South American soccer league that plays there regularly. However, this space is owned and managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), which limits the community's ability to control the park. There are other small playgrounds and parks throughout the neighborhood, but in the heart of the Winter Hill commercial district there are no publicly-accessible gathering spaces. This contributes to a sense of unfriendliness in the district towards visitors, but it also affects the quality of life for residents in the neighborhood.

The pedestrian experience alongside the Project Area.

The challenges identified in the Neighborhood Plan regarding connectivity between Winter Hill and the rest of Somerville, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists, remain. Some progress has been made. The Winter Hill in Motion project (described further in Public Improvements) provided dedicated bus lanes and bike lanes along Broadway and other street layout changes that have improved the transit experience for bus riders, bike riders, and pedestrians without sacrificing vehicular convenience. However, the numerous curb cuts, lack of shade or street trees, and steep hills still make the neighborhood daunting for visitors and residents.

The most substantial challenge to face Winter Hill, however, is one that is shared by many communities in the metro Boston area: housing affordability. Over a third of Somerville households, both renters and owners, are already cost-burdened by their housing, meaning they are paying over 30% of their income on housing costs (2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). According to the City's 2015 Housing Needs Assessment, an income of over $95,000 is needed to afford the average monthly rent in Somerville, but the median income for renter households in Somerville is just $58,510. This financial tension seems poised to only worsen; the 2014 Dimensions of Displacement report from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) projected that Somerville could need as many as 9,000 new housing units by 2030 to meet demand and maintain affordability. Of those 9,000 new units, MAPC estimated that 35% would be needed for low-income households. As of 2020, less than one-third of the 9,000 new units have been built, and fewer than a fifth of these units are affordable.

For Winter Hill, the situation is dire. While the Green Line Extension will allow more households to function without vehicular expenses and expand transit accessibility, this amenity will likely attract even more demand in the neighborhood. Of course, these burdens won't be distributed equally. According to the Dimensions of Displacement Report, households making less than $10,000 a year will see their rents increase by 17-20%, while higher income

households will see their rent increase to a lesser extent. In the last two years alone, 14% of the condo conversions in Somerville have occurred in the Winter Hill neighborhood, many of which are located near the Project Area (see Figure 3:1). Condo conversions can modernize and rehabilitate old properties, but they typically require the transformation of comparatively low-cost rental units into higher-end ownership properties accessible only to those making a higher income. Over time, hundreds of condo conversions throughout the city drive up housing prices as the rental supply diminishes. Somerville's Office of Housing Stability has worked with numerous clients facing eviction in this neighborhood, more than any other neighborhood in Somerville.

Despite these frustrations and deep-seeded economic challenges, there is a lot of wonderful energy in Winter Hill: residents gather to chat in one of the many historic pizza shops; neighbors meet up and plan events for their community at Winter Hill Brewing Company; abutters invest their time and money in an effort to turn vacant property into a community asset; families and students enjoy the soon-to-be-renovated Healey schoolyard. The neighborhood is diverse, and serves as a home to both long-term residents and new Americans. A successful Urban Renewal Plan will build on these treasured assets and improve the amenities the neighborhood can benefit from without transforming Winter Hill into an entirely new place.

Figure 3:1 - Condo Conversions in Winter Hill

Condo Conversions in Winter Hill, 2017-2019

PLANNING HISTORY

Winter Hill's major planning effort was completed in November 2016, with the Planning Board's adoption of the Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan. The plan emphasizes three core principles:

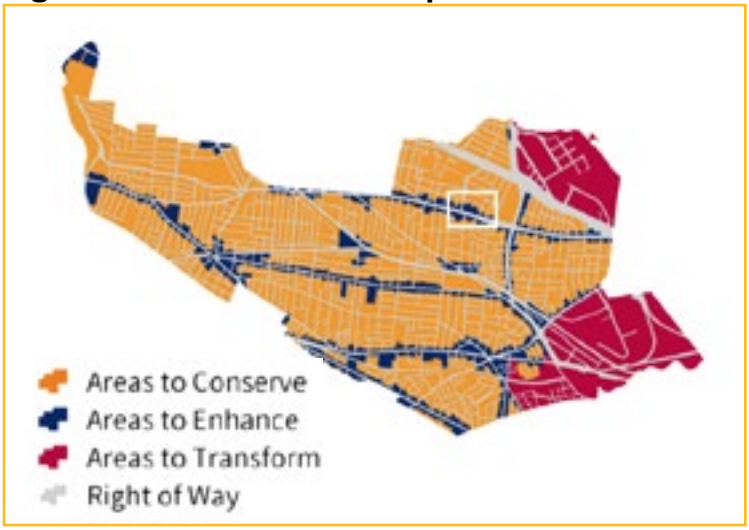
- Prioritize interaction and involvement with community members;
- Develop pro-business environment and rejuvenate the Broadway commercial main street;
- Reconnect Winter Hill to the rest of the city, both physically and culturally.

The plan envisions a commercial corridor that is restored as a main street destination, one with useful amenities, independent businesses, public gathering spaces, and an environment that is friendly to shoppers, diners, and visitors as well as residents. Complementing this is the vision for a more connected neighborhood; by improving the bike network, creating new and safer street crossings, and implementing policy decisions that protect all road users, Winter Hill will be more effectively tied into the surrounding community.

The plan also recommends the creation of an Urban Renewal Plan to help reclaim wasted space, redevelop key properties to support the business district, and create more housing in the neighborhood. The Neighborhood Plan identifies Winter Hill as a main street place type, so the imagined redevelopment opportunities emphasize mixed-use buildings that reinforce this identity. A main street place type is characterized by local economic and community activity, access to multiple transit modes, and a moderately dense mix of residential, commercial, employment, and civic or cultural uses. The retail in a main street district is locally-serving primarily, and residential development is low- to mid-rise on the corridor, and single-family off the corridor. Examples include Mass Avenue in Cambridge, Broadway in South Boston, Cambridge Street in Cambridge, and Main Street in Melrose.

The Neighborhood Plan was conducted in the context of SomerVision 2030, the City's Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in 2012. One of the key components of SomerVision is the map (Figure 3:2), which highlights which portions of the city are to be transformed, enhanced, or conserved. The properties along Broadway in Winter Hill are in the "enhance" zone, which calls for strategic updates to existing buildings and infill development of gaps to reinforce a sense of place and the main street identity in Winter Hill. SomerVision 2030 also calls for the kind of mixed-use, transit-oriented development that is proposed in this Plan.

Figure 3:2 - SomerVision Map



White rectangle denotes project area location.

In 2020, an update of SomerVision was drafted by a seventy-person committee of stakeholders and City staff, SomerVision 2040. Many aspects of SomerVision 2030 remain in the updated version. For example, affordable housing remains a major priority for Somerville residents as the threat of displacement due to rising costs affects every aspect of community life. In addition, incorporating an equity lens in analyzing the work that the city and developers do, increasing commercial

development to support the city's tax base and livability, and increasing the green space available to residents were also major priorities in SomerVision 2040. Although SomerVision 2040 has not yet been adopted, it has influenced the creation of this Plan, and will inform further work in Winter Hill.

PROJECT AREA

OVERVIEW

The Project Area for this Plan encompasses four parcels in the heart of the Winter Hill commercial district at the corner of Broadway and Temple St. Historically, the site was the home of the Capitol Theater, the city's largest and most luxurious theater when it opened in 1927. The enormous theater boasted 1,732 seats, its own orchestra, art deco murals and a new-at-the-time sound technology from Warner Brothers called the Vitaphone. Patrons could see vaudeville, news, serials, live music, and films at this theater. The original owner, an Armenian immigrant, went into debt to build the theater and the Union Realty Company foreclosed on the mortgage in 1930. Eventually a theater chain named M&P took it over. The Capitol closed in 1963, but was back in the news as the backdrop of the murder of Buddy McLean of the Winter Hill Gang in 1965. When various proposals for reuse failed, it was ultimately torn down to make way for the supermarket that sits on the site now.

Unfortunately, that supermarket has been vacant since 2007. The owner of the parcel that contains that building, as well as the Walgreens building, explored bringing in an Ocean State Job Lot. However, the Somerville Planning Board found that the proposal was inconsistent with the zoning purpose statements for both the Somerville Zoning code as a whole and its specific zoning district, which was Commercial Core District (CCD-55) at the time. The specific inconsistencies included the use, the building form, and the timing of the proposal, given that it was intended to be a long-term tenant. The owner of these parcels opted to sue the City for the outcome of this decision, and the matter has been in land court ever since.

In the meantime, residents have tried to make the most of the decrepit space. DigBoston profiled an effort in 2017 to turn

From Top: Interior of Capitol Theater (1945); Exterior of Capitol Theater (1941); Exterior of Capital Theater after murder of Buddy McLean (1965); Sanborn Map of Project Area (1958).

one of the vacant Sewall lots into "Sewall Commons," a play space for the neighborhood. Neighbors complained about the area being used "for people to defecate, urinate, litter, and consume drugs and alcohol after the grocery store shuttered," and used tactical urbanism in an effort to reclaim the space. A swing set, basketball hoop, sandbox, and plants were all donated, and neighbors worked to redesign the space and host events there, like a movie night and Halloween party. Abutters reported that litter and other poor behavior decreased after these interventions. However, the property owner soon issued a cease and desist to one of the abutters who had organized the efforts, citing liability concerns. As a result, the two Sewall lots remain vacant and untouched, and neighbors report that crime and litter have returned.

The data from the Somerville Police Department and the City's 311 system support these on-the-ground reports. From 2015-2019, the Somerville Police Department received an average of 135 calls for service per year for the reporting area incorporating the Project Area, which includes the parcels between Broadway, Sewall St, Temple St, and Grant St. These calls for service include calls made to 911, alarms, and radio dispatches, and may relate to anything from a major crime to someone accidentally locking themselves out of an apartment. Interestingly, the number of calls for service declined by 9% in 2017, when the community-led efforts to take back Sewall Commons were happening, although there is not enough information to draw a direct connection. In addition to these calls for service, patrol officers also proactively spend time in locations in hopes to deter problems, often as a response to community concerns. From 2015 through 2019, patrol officers engaged in an average of 200 of these directed patrols.

In addition to these data from the Somerville Police Department, the Constituent Services hotline (311) has also received numerous complaints from residents. Between 2015 and 2019, 311 received 20 reports of graffiti on the project site. In the same time frame, the property owner of the Star Market was ticketed 22 times for failure to remove trash and eleven times for failing to clear snow and ice from the sidewalks, making it one of the most ticketed properties in the city for this violation.

Assorted photos from neighborhood efforts to activate the Sewall Commons lot.

The deterioration of the Project Area is untenable to the residents in the neighborhood, who deserve better than the dilapidated, crime-ridden property that has been a centerpiece of their physical community since 2007. All conceivable approaches to developing the site without urban renewal have been exhausted: the City has adopted a Neighborhood Plan and new Zoning to support advantageous redevelopment, the community has attempted tactical interventions, and the City has worked enthusiastically with any developer who has demonstrated an interest in the site. Yet, the site remains vacant as successive potential developers abandon their plans.

Example of graffiti photographed by City staff in 2019.

During the community conversations that preceded this plan, there was discussion about establishing a larger Project Area which would incorporate further opportunity sites as highlighted in the Neighborhood Plan. However, the community priority is so clearly focused on Temple Square, that the SRA has opted for a smaller plan area, while considering the opportunity to expand the Project Area through a major plan amendment in the future if needed.

HISTORIC ASSETS

All of the buildings within the Project Area, because of their age, are subject to the City's Demolition Review Ordinance. As a result, the developer of any of the buildings would need to appear before the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) so that the HPC could determine first whether the building is "historically significant," and, if it is, whether it is "preferably preserved." A determination that a building would be preferably preserved would require a nine-month demolition delay to provide an opportunity for discussion about how to best preserve the building—whether through salvaging of materials, architectural drawings, photographic documentation, historical interpretive signage on the future development site, etc.

A photo of the turnout to the June 19, 2019 meeting about the Star Market site. Credit: Steven Nutter.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

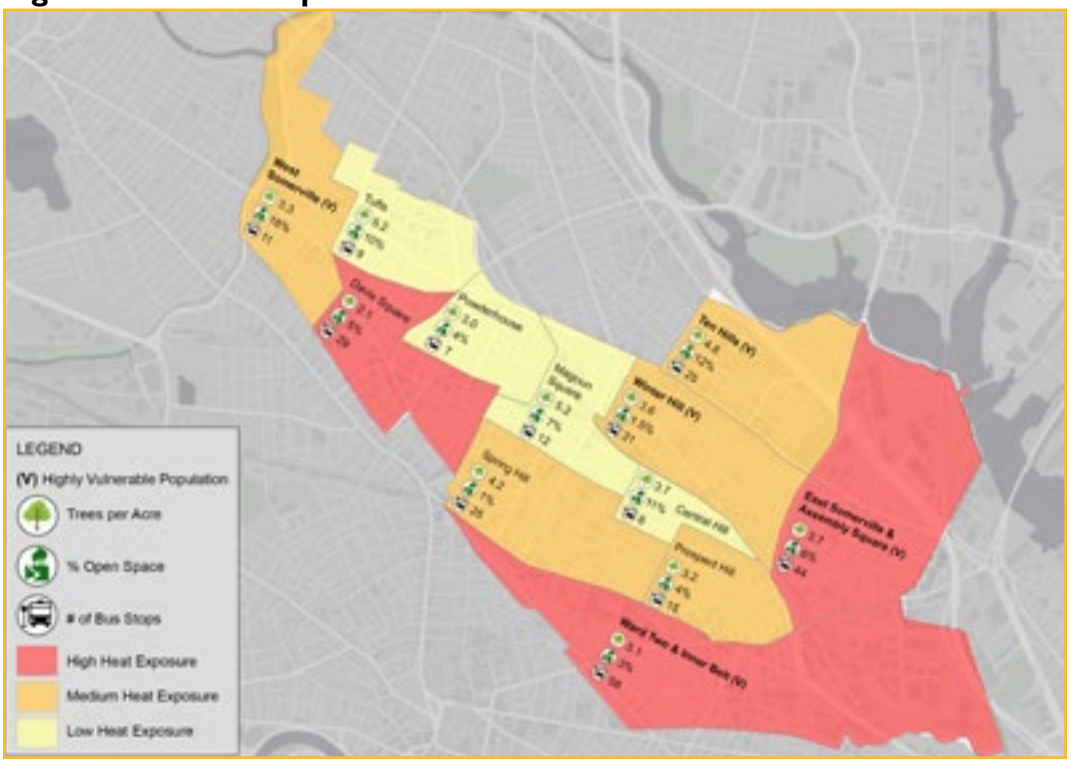
In 2019, the City utilized its Brownfields Assessment Grant through the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to conduct a windshield environmental assessment of possible project sites in the Winter Hill neighborhood. The City's environmental consultant for the EPA grant, TRC Environmental Corporation, reviewed historical and environmental information and conducted a windshield assessment on September 16, 2019. The purpose of this assessment was to determine if environmental concerns exist. TRC reviewed available historic and regulatory data and did not find any reason to suspect any underlying environmental contamination issues.

An historic photo of 9 Temple St, one of the buildings in the Project Area.

Although soil contamination does not appear to be an issue, indoor air quality may be. The Project Area hosts older buildings that may not have the mechanized ventilation systems required to mitigate air pollution from the ultrafine particles emitted by vehicles traveling along I-93 or Broadway.

Another major environmental concern in the Project Area is impervious surfaces. Currently, the entire surface of the Project Area is impervious, whether consisting of building rooftops, parking lots, driveways, or concrete. As climate changes cause higher temperatures throughout the city, such a concentration of pavement and hot surfaces contributes to urban heat island effect, which results in even higher temperatures in the vicinity. As depicted in Figure 3:3, Winter Hill is already at a moderate heat exposure, and its exposure is exacerbated by its low share of open space, which can help mitigate heat, and sites like this that further increase temperatures. These factors have major health impacts, including mortality, heat stroke, and heat exhaustion, as well as enabling the increased propagation of vector-borne diseases carried by insects that might not survive in colder environments, and worsening air quality, which can increase respiratory and cardiac health problems. These issues tend to disproportionately affect the young, elderly, and those with pre-existing health conditions. Furthermore, the Somerville Climate Vulnerability Assessment highlights Winter Hill as a neighborhood with a concentration of vulnerable populations who may be more likely to experience negative health effects and less likely to be able to access cooling.

Figure 3:3 - Heat Exposure in Somerville



City of Somerville Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, June 2017.

Beyond the heat-related impacts, the high share of impervious surfaces also affects the stormwater management in the neighborhood. As the rate of major rainfall events increases, sites like these can increase the risk of flooding, ultimately deteriorating water quality, which further impacts both human health and ecosystem health.

FINDING OF DECADENCE

M.G.L. c.121B, § 1 defines a "Decadent Area" as follows:

> *"Decadent Area", an area which is detrimental to safety, health, morals, welfare or sound growth of a community because of the existence of buildings which are out of repair, physically deteriorated, unfit for human habitation, obsolete, or in need of major maintenance or repair, or because much of the real estate in recent years has been sold or taken for nonpayment of taxes or upon foreclosure of mortgages, or because buildings have been torn down and not replaced and under existing conditions it is improbable that the buildings will be replaced, or because of a substantial change in business or economic conditions, or because of inadequate light, air, or open space or because of excessive land coverage or because diversity of ownership, irregular lot sizes or obsolete street patterns make it improbable that the area will be redeveloped by the ordinary operations of private enterprise, or by reason of any combination of the foregoing conditions.*

2020 photos of the Star Market property.

In accordance with M.G.L. c.121B, § 46, the SRA has determined that the Winter Hill Urban Renewal Area as described in this Renewal Plan is a "Decadent Area" as defined in M.G.L. c.121B, § 1. See Appendix TK for a copy of the decadence resolution passed by the SRA.

DECADENT CRITERIA

DETRIMENTAL TO THE COMMUNITY

The Project Area is a detriment to the Winter Hill neighborhood and negatively impacts the quality of life for its residents. The vacancy on the Sewall Street lots and the Star Market building has been a magnet for crime, and the sheer amount of pavement causes problems with stormwater management and heat island effect. The visual impact of such decrepit property in the heart of the Winter Hill commercial district makes it difficult for the landlords of adjacent properties to attract quality commercial tenants and for existing businesses to draw patrons into the neighborhood. All of these aspects of this decadent area are detrimental to the health and welfare of the businesses and residents of Winter Hill.

The Project Area also represents a barrier to sound growth in the neighborhood. The opportunity cost of the Project Area remaining as-is for the last decade is incalculable. The Neighborhood Plan clearly spells out the need for green space and mixed-use, transit-oriented development, and this site's location and size make it a perfect candidate to provide these needed amenities to the

neighborhood. When the neighbors have tried to turn this blight into a resource for their street on their own dime, they were met with the threat of legal action from the property owners. Every year that this decadent area remains in the context of one of the strongest real estate markets in the region is a letdown to the community.

DETERIORATED & OBSOLETE BUILDINGS

Finding: The Project Area contains buildings which are out of repair, physically deteriorated, and unfit for human habitation.

Much of the existing property in the Project Area is out of repair, owing to the long-term vacancy in the Star Market building. Although the other buildings have remained occupied, this positive presence has not done enough to combat the general decadence and deterioration of the Project Area as a whole. There are four existing buildings on the Project Area, labeled along with the vacant lots in Figure 3:4.

City staff conducted a survey to assess the state of the properties in the Project Area including the four buildings, two vacant lots, and Sewall Court. Each building or lot was rated along three categories: Roof and Exterior; Entrances, Doors, and Windows; and Yard, Parking, and Surrounding Areas. The possible ratings were:

- **GOOD** – The buildings in this category appeared to be in a structurally stable condition. In some cases, there were clear signs of building maintenance or recent rehabilitation such as new paint, new doors and windows.
- **SATISFACTORY** – Buildings in this category exhibited stable conditions and required minor rehabilitation such as new paint and window replacements. In some cases, exterior features (such as the entrance ways) required improvements to make them code compliant.
- **MODERATE DISREPAIR** – This category included buildings in need of minor structural repairs, porch or roof replacements or siding replacement. Certain building components appeared to be reaching the end of their useful lives. Some of the buildings required considerable maintenance on the overall structure.
- **SEVERE DISREPAIR** – This category included buildings that were visually dilapidated and needed extensive repairs. Most of these buildings required major investment in façade improvements, storefronts, walls and/or other architectural features.

To supplement observations made on the ground in June 2020, drone footage was used to better determine the condition of roofs. The vacant lots along Sewall Street are in severe disrepair, as is 299 Broadway (the vacant Star Market). The remaining buildings and Sewall Ct were considered satisfactory, with the excep-

tion of the Walgreens building, which appeared to have a roof in disrepair in the footage captured by the drone. The following pages capture the results of the building survey.

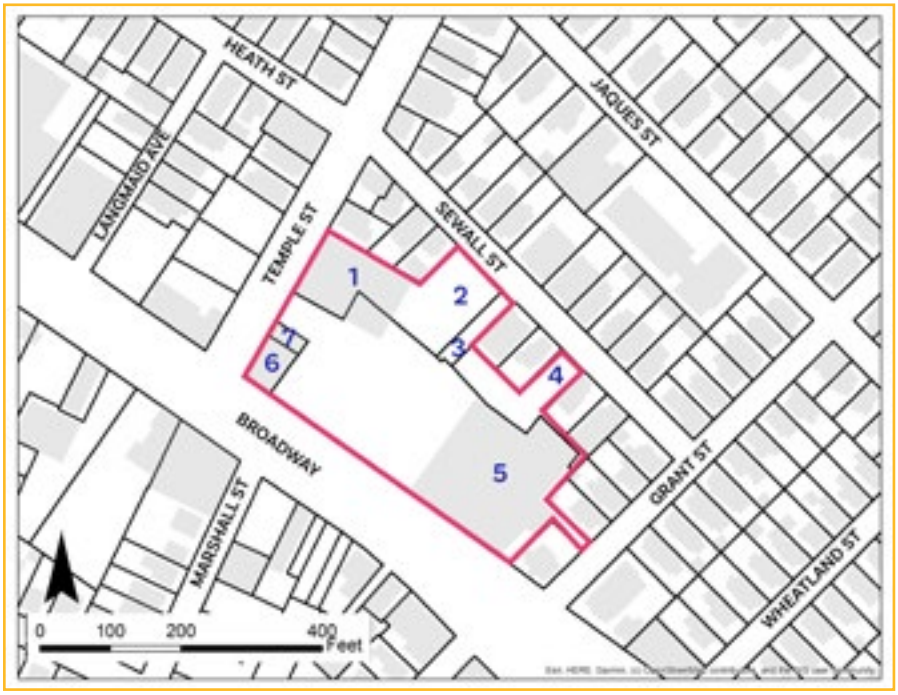
Finding: The Project Area contains buildings which are obsolete and do not meet current community needs.

The SRA finds that the Star Market and Walgreens buildings are distinctly auto-centric developments despite the fact that the businesses within the Project Area largely cater to local demand. The Neighborhood Plan clearly articulates a vision for transit-oriented, mixed-use development which, while including parking, also encourages arrivals by bike and foot or wheelchair. The dramatic orientation of the buildings away from the public realm and towards the vehicular parking degrade the character of the neighborhood and the safety of pedestrians on the sidewalk, who are met with large, featureless walls as they pass by the property.

Table 3:1 - Summary of Survey Results by Land Area

	Roof, Exterior	Entrances, Doors, Windows	Yard, Parking, Surrounding Areas
Good	0%	0%	0%
Satisfactory	8%	40%	35%
Moderate Disrepair	32%	0%	0%
Severe Disrepair	60%	60%	65%

Figure 3:4 - Map of Survey Results



WALGREENS | 15 TEMPLE STREET

Label on Figure 3:4	Use	Tenants	Date Built	Gross Area (in Sq Ft)
1	**Commercial**	**Walgreens**	**1970**	**16,800**

The existing Walgreens building provides a needed use and convenience to the neighborhood as the only pharmacy in the area. Since it has been consistently tenanted, the building remains mostly in satisfactory condition. The building appears to be structurally sound, although drone footage suggests some degree of roof disrepair. The store is only accessible from the parking lot, and the face along the sidewalk is just a beige wall, offering no activation of the street front. The parking area surrounding the immediate store is rundown, but functional.

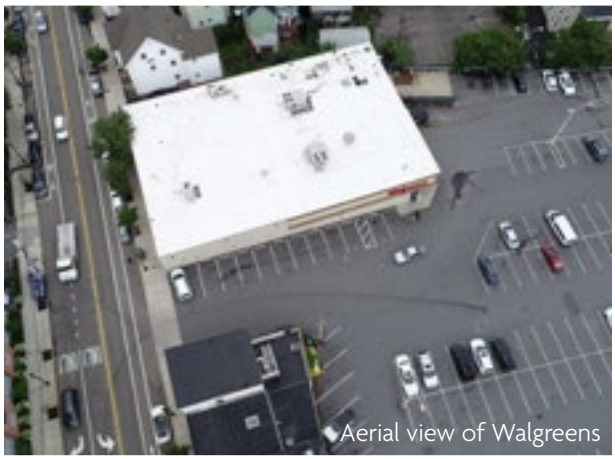
Survey Assessment:

- Roof and Exterior: Moderate Disrepair
- Entrances Doors and Windows: Satisfactory
- Yard, Parking, and Surrounding Areas: Satisfactory

View of Walgreens from Temple St

View of Walgreens from Star Market

Entrance of Walgreens


Aerial view of Walgreens

SEWALL COMMONS | BETWEEN 22 AND 36 SEWALL STREET

Label on Figure 3:4	Use	Tenants	Date Built	Gross Area (in Sq Ft)
2	**Parking Lot**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**7,000**

Sewall Commons, which sits between 22 and 36 Sewall Street, is a vacant parking lot, surrounded by a decrepit fence which has been locked in some places and broken apart in others. The neighbors' efforts to put in a basketball court remain. The pavement is uneven and showing severe damage, and the retaining wall and steps are also in a state of disrepair. There are signs of graffiti, previously painted over.

Survey Assessment:

- Roof and Exterior: N/A
- Entrances Doors and Windows: N/A
- Yard, Parking, and Surrounding Areas: Severe Disrepair

Basketball court neighbors painted on pavement

Damaged pavement

Broken and damaged fence

Rusted fence

SEWALL COURT

Label on Figure 3:4	Use	Tenants	Date Built	Gross Area (in Sq Ft)
3	**Parking Lot**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**1,800**

Sewall Court is a private right of way between 22 Sewall St and the Sewall St Commons, which is separated by a fence. Sewall Court is currently used as parking.

Survey Assessment:

- Roof and Exterior: N/A
- Entrances Doors and Windows: N/A
- Yard, Parking, and Surrounding Areas: Satisfactory

View from Sewall St

View from Sewall Street Lot

SEWALL STREET LOT | BETWEEN 12 AND 18 SEWALL STREET

Label on Figure 3:4	Use	Tenants	Date Built	Gross Area (in Sq Ft)
4	**Parking Lot**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**3,000**

The vacant Sewall lot further south on Heath Street is smaller, but also is surrounded by a decrepit chain-link fence. While the area is closed to vehicles, the fence is open to let pedestrians through. The pavement is in poor condition, as is the retaining wall that sits along the back of the property.

Survey Assessment:

- Roof and Exterior: N/A
- Entrances Doors and Windows: N/A
- Yard, Parking, and Surrounding Areas: Severe Disrepair

View from Star Market

View from Sewall St

Access to Sewall St

View from steps

STAR MARKET | 299 BROADWAY

Label on Figure 3:4	Use	Tenants	Date Built	Gross Area (in Sq Ft)
5	**Commercial**	**Vacant**	**1967**	**31,482**

More than a decade of abandonment has left this building in a dire condition. The property is covered in graffiti, littered with empty bottles and trash, and breaking down visibly. The entrance area has peeling paint. Viewed from the outside, it is evident that the inside has not been maintained at all and appears to have standing water on the floor. While the parking lot is functional, fences and guardrails are in disrepair. Pedestrians walking along Broadway must endure a long, blank brick wall, with no sense of activation or street presence.

Survey Assessment:

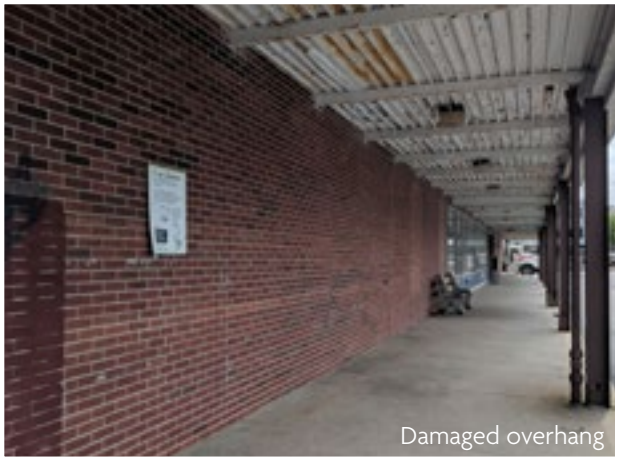
- Roof and Exterior: Severe Disrepair
- Entrances Doors and Windows: Severe Disrepair
- Yard, Parking, and Surrounding Areas: Severe Disrepair

Star Market building

Loading dock for Star Market

Damaged fencing and guardrail

Interior of Star Market from outside



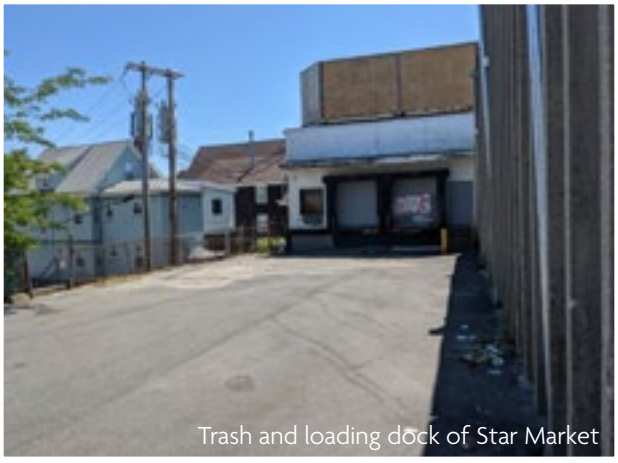
Damaged overhang

Explicit graffiti over a piece that had already appears to have been painted over

Trash along entrance

Graffiti on windows

Roof of Star Market



Trash and loading dock of Star Market

299 Broadway Continued

313 BROADWAY

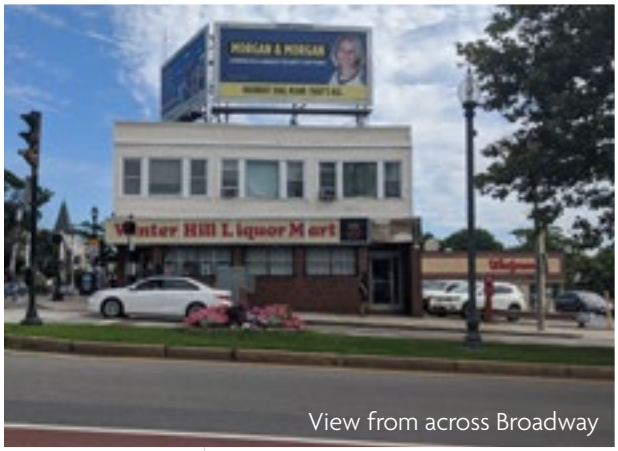
Label on Figure 3:4	Use	Tenants	Date Built	Gross Area (in Sq Ft)
6	**Commercial**	**Winter Hill Liquors, Brazilian Times**	**1910**	**10,703**

313 Broadway is the oldest building included in the Project Area, and its design saw it through Winter Hill's tougher years—metal bars protect the windows, and grates cover the entrances when it's closed. A large double billboard sits atop the building. The brickwork appears to have been repaired over the years, although it also appears that graffiti has been dealt with in the past. There doesn't appear to be any major issues with the roof or general exterior, although the Temple St side of the building is not ideal for the streetscape.

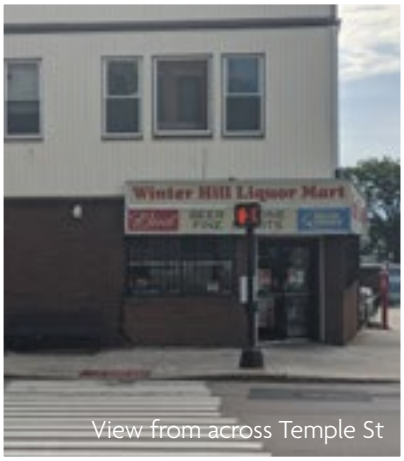
Two commercial tenants currently use the building. Winter Hill Liquor Store is an independent, locally-owned package store that serves the surrounding neighborhood, and the Brazilian Times is a beloved Portuguese-language newspaper serving much of the east coast. The proprietors also manage a nonprofit Brazilian cultural center from this office.

Survey Assessment:

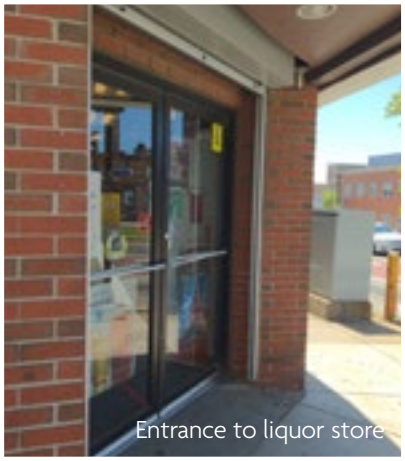
- Roof and Exterior: Satisfactory
- Entrances Doors and Windows: Satisfactory
- Yard, Parking, and Surrounding Areas: Satisfactory

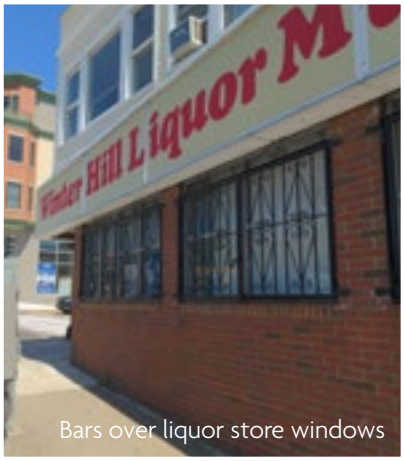


View from across Broadway



View from across Temple St


Entrance to liquor store



Bars over liquor store windows

9 TEMPLE STREET

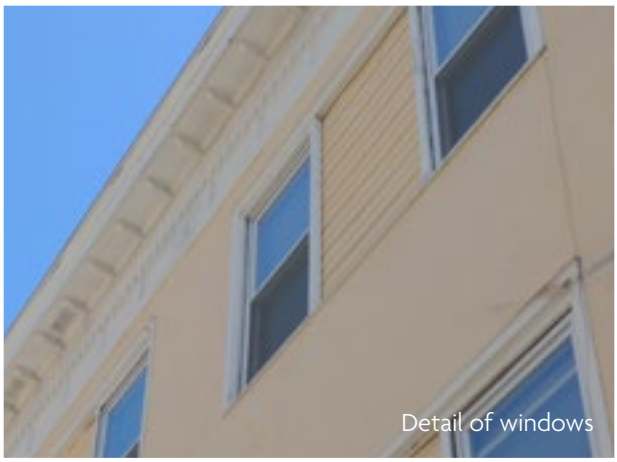
Label on Figure 3:4	Use	Tenants	Date Built	Gross Area (in Sq Ft)
7	**Mixed-Use**	**Elegancia Salon; 2 residential units**	**1940 (possibly earlier)**	**3,772**

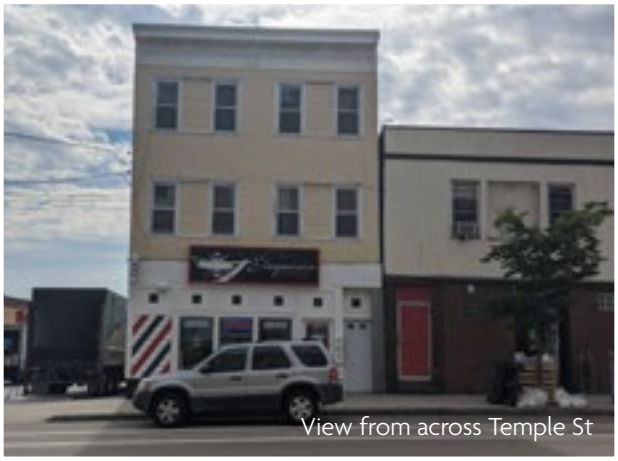
9 Temple Street is a three-story building that houses two residences and an independently-owned barbershop. The building was recently renovated and is in satisfactory condition. This building has been well-maintained and its architectural details preserved over the years. The windows appear to be older, but not damaged, and there are no visible problems with the roof.

Survey Assessment:

- Roof and Exterior: Satisfactory
- Entrances Doors and Windows: Satisfactory
- Yard, Parking, and Surrounding Areas: Satisfactory

View from Temple St


Detail of windows


View from across Temple St

OBSOLETE STREET PATTERNS

Finding: The Project Area is served by an obsolete street pattern.

The Project Area is situated on a block that is too big to provide comfortable walkability for the neighborhood. Urban planners believe that 200 feet to 350 feet is the ideal block size in a dense urban environment to provide a street network that serves all transit users, including vehicles. In its current state, the Project Area has nearly 540 feet between Grant Street and Temple Street. Creating a throughway, even if it's only accessible to pedestrians and bikers, will break up the block and make it easier to get around the neighborhood.

CHANGES IN BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Finding: The Project Area is unable to adjust to changing business and economic conditions.

The Star Market was an important fixture in the neighborhood in the seventies, but research indicates the probability of bringing in a new grocery tenant into the current building is highly unlikely. As summarized in the Neighborhood Plan, there are many barriers. First, the building, at 31,482 square feet, is an odd size by present-day standards. It is not big enough for a big box grocery retailer like Stop & Shop, Market Basket, or Shaw's, but not small enough for boutique grocery retailers like Trader Joe's or Whole Foods.

Secondly, the demographics and demand in the catchment area of the site are not appealing enough to many grocers. The presence of other grocery stores in the area, even if they seem inaccessible to portions of the Winter Hill neighborhood, is a deterrent for a new store moving in. Sometimes increased population density can make a location like the Project Area appealing enough to compete with these nearby grocers; adding units at the site could help attract a grocer.

Finally, even if a grocery or other tenant were interested in leasing the vacant building, so many years of neglect mean that any tenant will require substantial investment to make the building inhabitable again. This presents another barrier to the site ever being used again.

EXCESSIVE LOT COVERAGE

Finding: The Project Area is entirely impervious surfaces, constituting excessive lot coverage.

An estimated 60% of the surface area of the Project Area is pavement. Beyond

aesthetic concerns, having so much pavement contributes to problems with urban heat island effect and stormwater management. These issues, in turn, have substantial effects on human and environmental health. This dynamic is particularly important in a neighborhood like Winter Hill, which is already at a moderate heat exposure category and has one of the smallest shares of open space in the city. Redeveloping the site is necessary to create green open space in the Project Area, not only to provide gathering opportunities for the public, but also to mitigate these major concerns.

CHALLENGES FOR PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

Finding: Diversity in parcel ownership and irregular lot sizes make appropriate redevelopment difficult for private parties.

Many of the parcels in the project area are oddly shaped and situated. For example, the Sewall Street vacant lots are parts of parcels that experience a dramatic and sudden grade change, currently managed through a retaining wall and stairs on each site. A number of "spokes" like these poke out from the main body of the parcels, which may not be large enough to utilize fully as part of an urban development.

Another challenge to the redevelopment of the Project Area is the diversity of ownership. One owner does control the overwhelming majority of the site, but the two corner properties at Broadway and Temple St have two different owners and are equally important to the responsible redevelopment of Temple Square. Although these corner properties are essentially of sound condition, their locations are needed in order to provide the appropriate frontage along Broadway and Temple St. Furthermore, previous attempts at redevelopment have struggled to make a financially feasible deal because of the need to negotiate with three separate property owners, driving the overall price of the land too high for any project to be feasible for a private developer

NEED FOR PUBLIC ACTION

Over ten years of the status quo has demonstrated that private action is not sufficient to redevelop the Project Area, and that without public intervention the property will continue to languish in its current format. Meanwhile, the Project Area provides the unique opportunity to meet several key objectives identified by the community in the Neighborhood Plan and adopted as objectives for this Plan. By redeveloping the area into a transit-oriented, commercial and residential development, this area can support Winter Hill's identity as a neighborhood main street commercial district, provide new green space for residents, improve the streetscape experience for bikers and pedestrians, add much needed housing and

affordable housing into a neighborhood experiencing displacement, and ultimately better utilize these sites for the community needs.

To achieve these goals, the minimum public action necessary is to clear the Project Area, including the basically sound properties at the corner of Temple St and Broadway. The inclusion of these buildings will provide a more feasible real estate project that can provide more community benefits compared to a project that would accommodate these lots.

12.02(4) Objectives

THE VISION FOR WINTER HILL

The vision for Winter Hill is not one reliant on radical transformation, but rather of targeted redevelopment to better support the existing neighborhood and bring specific improvements identified in the Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan to Temple Square. Winter Hill is a diverse neighborhood, and any efforts in the neighborhood should ensure that it remains home for households of different races, ethnicities, languages, income levels, and household sizes and maximizes the benefits for the existing and future community.

Change is on the horizon for Winter Hill already; a Green Line Station only a short walk away from the heart of the district is scheduled to open in late 2021, which will make the neighborhood a more convenient destination and a more tempting location for businesses and residents alike. In wielding Urban Renewal as a tool, the SRA can work to ensure that changes preserve Winter Hill's character while making the improvements the community would like to see.

Rendering from the Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan.

The Objectives of this plan are as follows:

- Improve Winter Hill's identity as a neighborhood-oriented main street commercial district.
- Create green and open gathering spaces to support community life and the environment.
- Ensure a pedestrian- and bike-friendly experience.
- Minimize displacement by building additional affordable housing.
- Pursue redevelopment that produces equitable outcomes in the neighborhood.
- Redevelop vacant and underutilized properties into uses that better meet community needs.

A NEIGHBORHOOD-ORIENTED MAIN STREETS COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Whereas today many portions of Winter Hill are designed like strip malls with auto-centric commercial development, the vision is to return to the neighborhood's roots as a district catering to pedestrians in the neighborhood and visitors traveling by streetcar. Winter Hill will function as a main street, one with a cluster of businesses that continues to balance affordable convenient uses like pharmacies and one-of-a-kind independent businesses like Winter Hill Bakery and Pikliz, but in an environment that is safer and more welcoming to pedestrians. Development in the Project Area will complement existing historic buildings and provide retail, restaurants, and services on the ground floor and potentially include some small-scale office space that can provide jobs and draw daytime patrons to existing restaurants and retailers, giving them a stronger customer base.

A building with local businesses across the street from the Project Area.

Key Strategies:

- Incentivize a business association or other district management entity to facilitate collaboration among local businesses, contribute to the district's sense of identity, and to raise and manage funds that can be spent as the community sees fit on events, promotional endeavors, or items like planters and benches.
- Implement wayfinding to encourage transit riders arriving at the Gilman Square station to visit and shop in the Winter Hill business district.
- Establish more ground-floor retail and restaurant space through targeted redevelopment and, as possible, small-scale office space.
- Continue to provide technical assistance to existing businesses and new businesses in the district, working to ensure a mix of businesses providing different goods and services and representing different cultures and backgrounds.
- Work through the development process and the tenant selection process to ensure that business mix meets basic neighborhood needs (like pharmacies and fresh produce) and provides offerings at a variety of price points.
- Monitor commercial rents and keep in close contact with existing business owners to prevent as much as possible the boutiquification or gentrification of existing business offerings in the neighborhood.

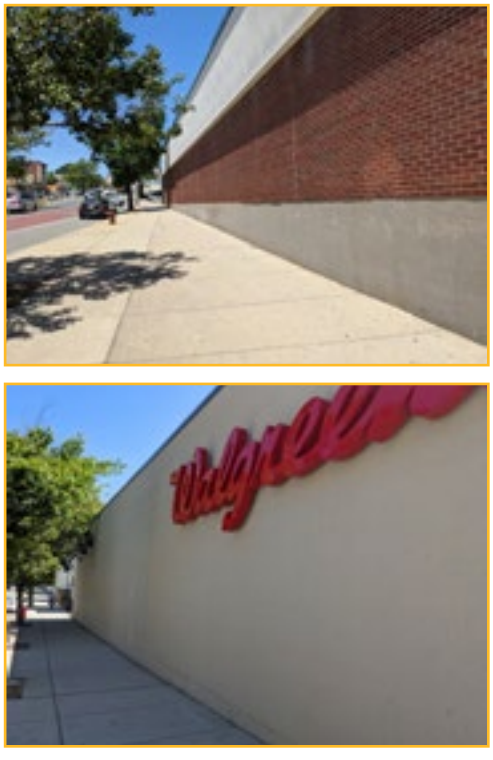
GREEN AND OPEN GATHERING SPACES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY LIFE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Winter Hill does not have enough green space in its neighborhood. Despite having a higher share of families than Somerville as a whole, there are very few parks in the area. Foss Park is down the street at Broadway and McGrath, and is one of the largest parks in the city; however, it is managed by the state, which does not offer much community control over the maintenance and use of the park. The creation of green civic space in the heart of the Broadway commercial district and within the Project Area would provide much-needed "hang out" space in Winter Hill, a place where the community can be outside without paying for the right to outdoor dining tables.

Additional green space will also reap environmental rewards in the neighborhood. Winter Hill is covered with asphalt parking lots and although these spaces are useful for those who drive, the overabundance of parking spaces contributes to heat island effect and stormwater management challenges. Adding additional green space will provide numerous social, health, and environmental benefits to the community.

Key Strategies:

- Create a publicly accessible green space at the site of Temple Square.
- Ensure that public green spaces are visible and welcoming to the community and visitors; any privately-owned public space should be designed so as to be obviously available to the use of all.
- To further combat heat island effect and the negative effects of asphalt, future streetscape improvements should seek opportunities to plant trees, stormwater gardens, and other vegetation throughout the area.



Photos of the pedestrian experience along Broadway and Temple St in 2020.

A PEDESTRIAN- AND BIKE-FRIENDLY EXPERIENCE

At any time of day in Winter Hill, there are shoppers and residents walking along Broadway and running errands or chatting with each other on the street. Implementing more and safer street crossings, minimizing curb cuts, and adding shade with street trees can all make the pedestrian experience more friendly and inviting, and minimize potential conflicts with vehicular traffic. Recently, the City implemented the Winter Hill in Motion project, which piloted new street lane designs

to prioritize bus and bike safety, which has inspired both positive and negative feedback from the community. However, with the Green Line Extension coming, it is likely that many residents will be able to get around on foot or wheelchair, by bike, or by public transit. Ensuring that we have the wide sidewalks, storage for bikes, and a more humane pedestrian experience will help minimize new vehicular traffic and encourage more sustainable modes of transit.

Redeveloping the Project Area into a site that prioritizes a human experience rather than a vehicular one will be a significant contribution to the commercial district as a whole. By developing buildings that respect and orient towards the sidewalks and minimizing curb cuts for cars, Broadway and Temple St will feel more welcoming to residents, workers, and visitors.

Key Strategies:

- As possible, reduce the number of vehicular curb cuts throughout the district.
- Create new, raised crossings in strategic locations to keep pedestrians safe.
- Ensure that new residential development includes storage for bikes.
- Implement a streetscape design that ensures accessibility and safety for many travel modes and abilities.

MINIMIZE DISPLACEMENT BY BUILDING ADDITIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING

People want to live in Somerville, and that demand has pushed apartment and house prices up to astronomical heights in recent years while also incentivizing the condo-ization of multifamily apartment buildings. Given that access to transit is an amenity for renters and buyers, the arrival of the Green Line Extension to the Winter Hill neighborhood will likely increase costs in the immediate area even further. By strategically encouraging development on under-utilized parcels, the SRA can add much-needed units to capture some of this demand, minimizing the displacement of other households in the area as a result. Although such development on the Temple Square site will also lead to the displacement of two households, this plan and the state's regulations on relocation benefits will ensure that these households receive technical assistance and financial benefits to find new, suitable housing; such benefits are not a requirement of private developments.

Condo conversions and home renovations raise property values and create safer and healthier properties, but can also turn rental units into ownership units and raise housing costs, creating barriers to accessible housing.

In addition to the general need for market-rate housing, Somerville also needs explicitly affordable housing, and units that meet the needs of a wide variety of income levels. Inclusionary zoning mandates that any new project with over 18 units will have 20% of them affordable. This is a terrific baseline, but development

plans and community benefits should be analyzed for any opportunity to further support affordable housing, either through funding to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund or the construction of purpose-built affordable housing.

New housing in Winter Hill can also provide units with multiple bedrooms. The community currently houses many families, and new development that includes two or three bedrooms can complement this aspect of the neighborhood's character.

Key Strategies:

- Build a development that includes housing and, as mandated by Inclusionary Zoning, affordable housing units.
- Explore opportunities to work with mission-driven affordable housing developers to create purpose-built affordable housing, particularly in one of the vacant lots along Sewall Street.
- Explore whether developments can include units with multiple bedrooms to encourage family households as well as studio or one-bedroom dwellers to move into new construction.

REDEVELOPMENT THAT PURSUES EQUITABLE OUTCOMES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Although not a requirement of urban renewal plans, this plan includes an Equity Analysis (Appendix I), which explicitly considers the racial and socioeconomic equity issues inherent in pursuing redevelopment in the Winter Hill neighborhood. As discussed in the Appendix, Winter Hill has a higher share of Black and Latinx residents than Somerville as a whole. It is imperative that any efforts in the neighborhood take into account historic and systemic inequities and commit fully to community engagement and empowerment.

Key Strategies:

- Work closely and in partnership with the community to determine the exact nature of development occurring in the neighborhood and to maximize public benefits in a way that meets the needs and priorities as identified by the community.
- Incorporate the community into the decision-making processes and ensure that all decisions are informed by feedback that comes from as many different perspectives as possible.
- Rethink status quo community engagement techniques to encourage participation from all races, cultures, and socioeconomic statuses, while ensuring the health and safety of participants in the context of COVID-19.

- Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan to investigate the results of an Urban Renewal Plan in the neighborhood. Although it may be impossible to distinguish results of the Green Line Station's arrival from that of the Urban Renewal Plan, such analysis is imperative to understand the consequences of our project and whether our goals were achieved.

REDEVELOPMENT OF VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED SITES

Currently, at the geographic heart of Winter Hill is the most blighted, derelict property in all of Somerville: Temple Square. Neighbors complain about the drug deals they witness in the vacant lots on Sewall Street, which are surrounded by chain link fences which have been damaged to permit access through the site. The vacant Star Market is in dire shape. Even from the outside, one can see graffiti, material falling from the internal ceiling, places where glass windows have been broken, and the dirty exterior of a dilapidated building. This site, despite its location in one of the hottest real estate markets in the country, has remained in this state since 2007.

Winter Hill deserves better. City staff believes that the ideal redevelopment would include the vacant lots along Sewall Street, the Star Market building and parking lot, the Walgreens building, and two buildings—owned by different owners and in satisfactory condition—which sit at the corner of Temple St and Broadway. The two vacant lots along Sewall Street will be taken earlier in the process, with one lot being used for a public open space, and the other being used for a small affordable housing project that would match the residential character of Sewall Street. The remainder of the Project Area will be redeveloped to offer commercial space, residential units, and green open space. The exact design of the project will be informed by the community process described in the Citizen Participation chapter.

Temple Square's continued vacancy over the last thirteen years has demonstrated a likelihood that the site will not be developed without public action. As a result, the SRA will acquire, assemble, and dispose of the properties to catalyze redevelopment of the Project Area. This Plan will ensure that, not only will this decadent area be eliminated, but the redevelopment project will allow the community to play a more active role in determining what project would best suit their needs at the site than would be possible in the event of a private redevelopment effort.

Key Strategies:

- Improve subsurface infrastructure to enable redevelopment in the neighborhood (See Public Improvements chapter.).

- Redevelop Temple Square, working with the community to ensure the SRA selects a suitable redevelopment partner and moves forward on projects that best suits the neighborhood's needs.

THE GOALS

In pursuit of the above objectives and strategies, the SRA has also identified the following goals, which have been inspired by the Neighborhood Plan, more recent community feedback, and the Equity Analysis contained herein (Appendix I).

- Provide at least 40 net new jobs, at least 200 new housing units, including at least 40 new affordable housing units, to provide employment and housing opportunities for Somerville residents of all socio-economic levels and to bring a stronger customer base to existing businesses. The proposed renewal will eliminate two rental housing units and three businesses which employ an estimated thirty jobs total; displaced parties are entitled to relocation assistance and payments established under M.G.L. c. 79A and 760 CMR 27.00.
- Create at least an additional .5 acres of publicly accessible open, green space.
- Ensure that 25% of Temple Square is permeable surface.
- Develop in partnership with the Citizen Advisory Committee a community engagement strategy that will gather feedback from residents, workers, and other stakeholders from different races, cultures, and socioeconomic levels. This strategy will need to contend with the realities of COVID-19 and identify how to measure success.
- Add enough new housing and commercial development into the neighborhood to lessen the increase in rental prices that will likely result from the Green Line station's arrival compared to other station areas.
- Increase the revenues of existing businesses in the Winter Hill commercial district.
- Preserve the pharmacy use in Temple Square and, if possible, provide access to fresh produce in the neighborhood.

The Somerville Zoning Overhaul was adopted in December 2019.

ZONING

After over seven years of research and analysis, hundreds of community meetings, multiple public hearings and extensive review by the former Board of Aldermen and current City Council, Somerville

approved a new zoning ordinance in December 2019. This was the city's first major overhaul of zoning since 1990, and updated some regulatory elements that had existed since zoning was first adopted in 1924. The zoning code is a form-based code that incorporates best practices from performance-based and use-based zoning, and has been designed to support the implementation of objectives identified in SomerVision 2030.

Furthermore, the zoning overhaul also better supports the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles. It encourages mixed uses, particularly by transit areas; articulates the community processes required for different kinds of development; encourages the use of sustainable transit models; provides additional housing choices like backyard cottages and tiny houses; and through its modern, readable, clearly-illustrated format makes the permitting process and regulatory components much easier to understand and more predictable for developers.

This state-of-the-art zoning code will govern density, land coverage, land use, setbacks, off street parking, and loading and the building height and bulk of any redevelopment on Temple Square. Numerous provisions in the code will ensure that, by default, redevelopment in the Project Area will meet many of the goals of this Plan, including: required special permit for any formula business; a Somerville Green Score for environmental sustainability performance (a first in New England); parking maximums in all areas within walking distance to rapid transit stations; robust minimum bicycle parking requirements; and requirements to widen sidewalks.

This Plan is based upon a local survey and conforms to any existing planning documents covering the urban renewal area as a whole including SomerVision, the Comprehensive Plan for the City.

LAND DISPOSITION AGREEMENTS

As is required by the Housing and Urban Renewal regulations of 760 CMR 12.05, DHCD will approve a Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) for each Disposition Parcel. Each LDA will include covenants and safeguards to ensure that the particular Disposition Parcel is redeveloped in accordance with the representations of the redeveloper and the expectations of the City of Somerville and the SRA.

12.02(5) Acquisitions

This Plan proposes the acquisition of four parcels, which make up the entirety of the Project Area. The acquisition of these parcels is absolutely necessary in order to meet community objectives as described in the Objectives chapter. By acquiring the Project Area, assembling parcels appropriately, and disposing them to the City and developers, the SRA will catalyze redevelopment that creates additional commercial space, new housing units, and green open space for the community on what is currently a decadent area.

Table 5:1 - Acquisition Parcels

Map-Block-Lot	Address	Current Owner	Current Use	Proposed Use	Land Area (Square Feet)
70-D-27 and 70-D-10[1]	299 Broadway	COHEN H A TRUSTEE C/O SHAWS and COMAR R E TRUST - JIM COHEN	Vacant building and parking	Commercial, residential, and green open space	89,105
70-D-5	15 Temple St	COHEN H A TRUSTEE	Pharmacy and parking	Commercial, residential, and green open space	25,493
70-D-24	313 Broadway	HOWARD J W TRUSTEE and 313 BROADWAY REALTY TRUST	Commer-cial	Commercial, residential, and green open space	3,165
70-D-25	9 Temple St	PRIVITERA PHILLIP J TRUSTEE and 9 TEMPLE ST REALTY TRUST	Housing and com-mercial	Commercial, residential, and green open space	1,179
N/A	Sewall Court	Private	Parking	Green open space	1,800

1 70-D-10 was subsumed by 70-D-27.

12.02(6) Preliminary Relocation Plan

This Plan may involve the displacement of approximately 4 commercial occupants and 2 residential tenants located on 4 parcels of property that may be either acquired in total or in part. The preliminary relocation plan included at Appendix II has been prepared exclusively for this project and outlines the anticipated relocation program and procedures that will be undertaken by the SRA in connection with its assistance to displaced occupants.

The preliminary plan was based on review of existing data contained within the Urban Renewal Plan. In keeping with generally accepted practices, this relocation plan may be amended and modified prior to project commencement. It is understood that the properties identified in the Plan for this project may change as the program evolves and until the actual properties to be acquired is more defined and the eventual timing of any property acquisitions is established that it is preferable for site occupants and property owners to wait on obtaining information from potentially displaced occupants for a later date. Eventual interviews with occupants and the information obtained from such interviews will be added to the relocation plan as an addendum and will subsequently be submitted to the Massachusetts Bureau of Relocation for review, consideration and approval.

All relocation activities will comply with applicable state and federal regulations and will be supported by a relocation plan prepared in accordance with applicable federal and state requirements, including the requirements of 760 CMR 27.00, Relocation Assistance Regulations. No displacement will occur until a relocation plan has been finalized and approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (DHCD)'s Bureau of Relocation.

All eligible lawful occupants determined by the SRA to be displaced as a result of the property acquisition for this project will be provided relocation assistance and payments pursuant to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970, as amended; 42 U.S.C. Section 4601 et seq.; and the applicable implementing regulations set forth in Title 49, Part 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations (together the "Uniform Act"). In addition, the SRA will adhere to the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 79A, and 760 Code of Massachusetts Regulations, Part 27.00. In any instances where the SRA determines that there is a conflict between federal or state laws and/or regulations, with respect to relocation payments or benefits to eligible displaced occupants, the SRA will make every effort to apply the requirements of whichever law or regulation provides the greater benefit to the displaced occupant.

During the relocation process, the SRA will provide ongoing information relative to available space, assistance programs including, but not limited to, small business loan programs and other data that may be useful to displaced occupants. A number of businesses may require assistance from the City of Somerville with respect to licenses and other approvals. Historically, municipal agencies are available to assist any business displaced due to public action in this regard. In addition, experienced commercial real estate brokers will be enlisted to be available to any affected occupants in order to assess potentially suitable replacement locations in a timely and cost effective manner.

It is anticipated that acquisition of property will occur in 2024. However, the exact timing of displacement is dependent on the developer's construction schedule. Possible site plans may allow for phased development, which would allow occupants to remain on site longer. More detail on timing of displacement will be included in the subsequent relocation plan to be prepared as required under G.L. 79A.

Approximately 4 business concerns and 2 residential tenants may be relocated as part of the redevelopment project. An inventory is provided in Table 6:1. The names of all lawful eligible occupants will be confirmed prior to and/or as a part of undertaking tenant interviews. Inclusion of occupants on this list does not establish eligibility for relocation assistance or benefits and is subject to change or review depending upon the eventual accepted plan to acquire property for demolition.

Table 6:1 - Parties Potentially Requiring Relocation

Parcel ID	Address	Name	Type of Business
70-D-27 and 70-D-5	15 Temple St	Walgreens	Pharmacy
70-D-24	311-313 Broadway	Brazilian Times	Newspaper
70-D-24	311-313 Broadway	Winter Hill Liquors	Liquor Store
70-D-25	9 Temple St	Elegancia	Barber Shop
70-D-25	9 Temple St #2	Resident	
70-D-25	9 Temple St #3	Resident	

12.02(7) Site Preparation

PARCEL ASSEMBLAGE

Once the parcels are acquired, the SRA will re-subdivide the Project Area to create three disposition parcels: Sewall Commons (D1) to become green open space, Sewall Lot (D2) to become affordable housing, and the remainder as D3, to become a mixed-use development featuring commercial, residential, and green open space.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT & REMEDIATION

According to TRC's Windshield Environmental Survey (Appendix III), the Project Area is not expected to have any significant environmental contamination. However, the City will still conduct Phase I Environmental Site Assessments prior to acquisition by the SRA. Either the City or a developer responsible for demolition will conduct hazardous materials assessments for the four buildings that would be demolished.

DEMOLITION & CONSTRUCTION

The SRA anticipates that the developers would be responsible for demolition of the existing buildings and installing fences as needed to secure the property. Developers will also be responsible for project permitting and all pre-construction requirements, including meeting the requirements of the City's Demolition Review Ordinance.

12.02(8) Public Improvements

INTRODUCTION

A number of public improvements regarding infrastructure, open space, transportation, and streetscape are identified in the Objectives section of this Plan and in the Neighborhood Plan. Many of these public improvements will be adjacent to the Project Area site, not within it, but will nonetheless play an important role in supporting this Plan's outcomes. Investments in transportation and the streetscape of the Broadway corridor will make a dramatic impact in how pedestrian- and bike-friendly the neighborhood is for residents and business patrons. The creation of new open space will provide green gathering spaces that support the surrounding community. Finally, major infrastructure investments in the subsurface water and sewer systems are absolutely essential in order to adequately serve existing residents and to add any more housing units in Winter Hill. Each of these different portions will assist in making Winter Hill the welcoming, comfortable main streets district the community envisions.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Broadway corridor along Winter Hill is in need of substantial water and sewer improvements. Any new development in the neighborhood would likely require a major sewer separation project to meet Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) regulations. In addition, as development of new housing occurs in Somerville, the City must offset new sanitary flows to the sewer system by removing stormwater from the system. Therefore, the proposed redevelopment in the Urban Renewal area cannot occur without these improvements.

Separating the sewer and stormwater systems will meet this requirement, as well as providing additional benefits. First, such an effort provides the opportunity to replace aging infrastructure; significant portions of the subsurface infrastructure in Winter Hill are currently at risk of failure, so this is particularly important for the neighborhood. In addition, separated sewer systems help to mitigate flooding during major rain events by increasing stormwater capacity. They also reduce the risk of contaminating natural water bodies in the area. These benefits are not only for new residents living in the proposed redevelopments, but also the existing residents and businesses of Winter Hill who rely on the current system.

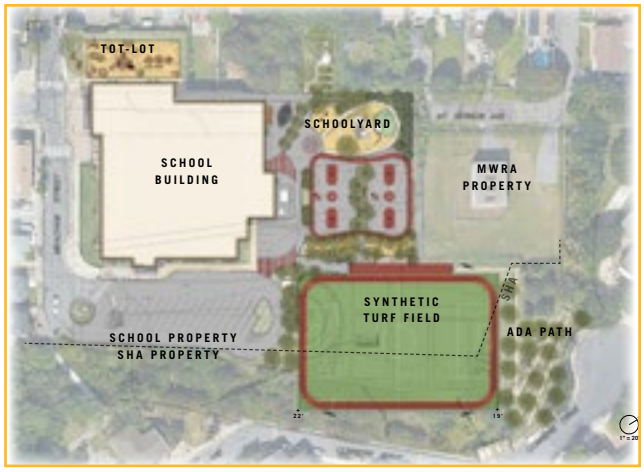
Fortunately, high-level planning is already underway for these necessary investments. The City is creating a Citywide Drainage and Water Quality

Master Plan that will assist in identifying existing and projected sewer system needs throughout the city. Further high-level planning on the Winter Hill sewer separation project will continue through 2021, and the expectation is that the project will be shovel-ready in three to five years (2023-2025), and that the project could be complete by 2026-2027.

Cost is a major obstacle for such a major undertaking, but sewer separation projects like this one are in the City's Water & Sewer Capital Improvements Plan. Furthermore, implementing district improvement financing in the Urban Renewal Area can leverage the value that new development and proximity to the Green Line Extension will create to support this essential public project.

OPEN SPACE

The creation of new, green gathering spaces for the community is one of the Objectives of this Plan. Improvements to existing spaces nearby are already underway, including a major renovation of the Healey Schoolyard, the design for which recently won an award from the Boston Society of Landscape Architects. Construction is currently on hold due to COVID-19, but the City expects to commence construction as soon as 2021. In addition, the City has also worked with the Department of Conservation and Recreation to improve the management of Foss Park in a way conducive to community needs.



Site Plan for the Healey Schoolyard renovation.

However, even with these incremental improvements, the community needs additional green space. By redeveloping Temple Square through this Plan, the City will create a public open space on one of the vacant Sewall Street lots and encourage a future developer to incorporate a privately-owned public space within the rest of the development area. The additional open space will provide numerous benefits to the community. In addition to serving as important gathering space, the increased landscaping can assist with stormwater management, mitigating heat island effect, and supporting local wildlife.

TRANSPORTATION

For years, the extreme width of Broadway, the suburban designs of many commercial properties, and antiquated streetscape infrastructure contributed to a sense of danger to people walking, biking, or using bus transit in the commercial district. The Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan identifies many necessary

transportation improvements, near the Project Area, which the City has made progress on since the plan was adopted.

Winter Hill in Motion street design.

One of the City's most high-profile actions to address these issues was the Winter Hill in Motion project, which transitioned a vehicular travel lane in each direction into a priority bus and bike lane. As a result, the MBTA added bus trips to weekday, Saturday, and Sunday schedules, resulting in more frequent service of the 89 and 101 lines, which provide access to Davis Square, Sullivan Square, Medford, Malden. This increase in service caused daily ridership to increase substantially, with hundreds more riders taking advantage of the improved bus system. Furthermore, the changes resulted in an average of 30-60 second travel time improvement for buses headed east, and the travel times and total volume of vehicle traffic also declined as well.

In addition to the Winter Hill in Motion project, there were a number of activities the City undertook in pursuit of a number of transportation-related goals identified in the Neighborhood Plan.

- **Slowing the unposted speed limit to 25 mph throughout Somerville to ensure a safer environment for pedestrians, bikers, and drivers alike.** Since the Neighborhood Plan was adopted, the City designated all residential streets in Winter Hill as safety zones, reducing the posted speed limit to 20 mph in the neighborhood. In addition, the City lowered the posted speed limit on Broadway from 30mph to 25 mph. These changes were approved in 2020.
- **Providing a more comfortable biking experience in the neighborhood, and improving bike and pedestrian connections to other neighborhoods.** The City installed bike lanes on Temple St in 2019 and a contraflow bike lane on Marshall Street in 2018. The Winter Hill in Motion project installed protected bike lanes on Broadway between Magoun Square and McGrath Highway. In addition, there was also a MassDOT-funded project at the intersection of Temple St and Mystic Ave that widened sidewalks and removed excess vehicle lanes to provide a more comfortable pedestrian crossing. During the COVID-19 outbreak, the City also implemented Shared Streets in Winter Hill to provide more space for pedestrians.
- **Revisiting existing bus routes and frequency given the arrival of the Green Line.** The MBTA is currently engaged in a redesign of its regional bus network. One important idea that has emerged through this

process is the possibility of modifying the existing MBTA Route 85 bus service to serve the Winter Hill neighborhood and connect it to Gilman Square, Spring Hill, Union Square and Kendall Square.

- **Considering optimizing bus service by consolidating stops while ensuring remaining stops are not too far apart.** In partnership with the MBTA, the City consolidated bus stops along Broadway from 10 eastbound stops and 11 westbound stops between Medford St and McGrath Hwy to 7 eastbound stops and 7 westbound stops.
- **Implementing a Complete Streets policy in Winter Hill that prioritizes the needs of pedestrians, transit users, bicyclists, and then cars.** Somerville has a citywide Complete Streets ordinance, and projects in Winter Hill have worked to support these priorities.

Although many of these improvements were focused beyond the Project Area, they have helped to support a better pedestrian experience in the Winter Hill commercial district, which the redevelopment of the Project Area will both benefit from and build upon.

STREETSCAPE

A streetscape redesign for Central Broadway from McGrath Highway to Magoun Square was initiated in March 2014, but was ultimately put on hold in order to investigate subsurface conditions. Naturally, investing in a new streetscape of the scale deserving of Winter Hill would be fiscally irresponsible if sewers and water lines under the street are at the end of their usable life. As discussed in the Infrastructure portion of this plan, subsequent research has demonstrated that major construction is needed along this stretch of Broadway.

However, once that subsurface work is complete, a new streetscape will be essential to creating the pedestrian-friendly, main streets environment our Neighborhood Plan envisions. In addition to all of the transportation improvements previously identified, a successful streetscape project will also include new trees and vegetation and wide, attractive sidewalks. This added greenery and more inviting pedestrian experience will provide health and environmental benefits to both existing and new residents.

12.02(9) Property Disposition

Properties acquired by the SRA for the purposes of this Plan will be assembled for development, and disposition will proceed in accordance with 760 CMR 12.05: Urban Renewal Regulations. This Plan creates three Disposition Parcels, as described in Table 9-1.

Table 9:1 - Disposition Parcels

	Current Parcels	Approx. Area (Square Feet)	Proposed Use
D1: Sewall Commons	Part of 70-D-5 and Sewall Court	8,800	Green open space
D2: Sewall Lot	Part of 70-D-27	3,000	Affordable housing
D3: Temple Square	Part of 70-D-5, Part of 70-D-27, 70-D-24, and 70-D-25	108,050	Commercial, residential, and green open space

D1: SEWALL COMMONS

D1 is known to the neighborhood as the Sewall Commons because of community efforts to activate the site into a neighborhood asset. This site is one of two empty parking lots on Sewall Street; this one sits between 22 and 36 Sewall Street and is the larger of the two lots. Sewall Court, a private way abutting the site, will also be incorporated into D1. D1 will be created by subdividing it along its retaining wall from D3. The SRA intends to convey the parcel to the City of Somerville to develop into a public open space.

D2: SEWALL LOT

D2 is the smaller of the vacant lots along Sewall, and is situated between 12 and 18 Sewall Street. The SRA intends to convey the property to a mission-driven affordable housing developer to generate an affordable housing project consistent with the scale of the neighborhood.

D3: TEMPLE SQUARE

The remainder of the Project Area would be consolidated into D3. The specific development program for this parcel will be determined through a community process as outlined in the Citizen Participation chapter, but the SRA's expectation based on the Neighborhood Plan would be that the site would host a mixed-use development with substantial green space, ground-floor retail, and a number of housing units.

12.02(10) Redeveloper Obligations

Upon approval of this Plan, the SRA will be responsible for the acquisition and disposition of all acquisition/disposition parcels and expects to work with three separate developers, one for each disposition site. For each disposition parcel, potential developers shall be required to provide, at minimum:

- A full description of the proposed development
- A narrative connecting the proposed development to the goals outlined in this Plan, the Neighborhood Plan and SomerVision.
- A financial plan that discusses the strength of the developer's financial sources
- A timetable for design, permitting, and construction
- Past experience and references
- Whether the developer is a minority- or women-owned business and whether they will endeavor to contract with minority- or women-owned businesses throughout the development process

The Citizen Advisory Committee or SRA may add further requirements, particularly for the acquisition and disposition of D3. For D3, the SRA will solicit Requests for Qualifications to identify a shortlist of interested and qualified developers before inviting these developers to respond to a later Request for Proposals for the redevelopment of the parcel. For each of these phases of the process, the Citizen Advisory Committee will assist in determining what information is needed from the developer and assessing the proposals that are submitted. How and to what extent the proposals incorporate the Objectives of this Plan will be a key factor in the evaluation of all proposals.

Selected private developers and the SRA will enter into a Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) for each Disposition Parcel or Disposition Block, the parties to which will be the designated redeveloper and the SRA. The LDA will describe the development to be constructed in detail and will contain safeguards, such as rights of reverter, ensuring that the SRA's and the City of Somerville's expectations as to any proposed project are fully met and that the project is constructed substantially as proposed. The LDAs will be subject to the approval of the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development.

12.02(11) Time Frame

This section of the Plan identifies a time frame for the implementation of this Plan, which will expire ten years after the date of City Council approval. For a complete description of the community process included in the time frame, see the chapter on Citizen Participation.

Table 11-1: Implementation Time Frame

D1: Sewall Commons	D2: Sewall Lot	D3: Temple Square	Other
Short Term Tasks (1-3 Years)			
SRA acquires and subdivides this site. SRA conveys the site to the City of Somerville for development into a park. Funding sources located. Project permitting begins.	SRA acquires and subdivides this site. SRA conveys the site to a mission-driven affordable housing developer to develop the site into affordable housing. Project permitting begins.	The Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) is established. Community meetings about the redevelopment of Temple Square are held. Shortlist of preferred developers identified through Request for Qualifications process. Developer selected through Request for Proposals process. Exclusive negotiation and development of a land disposition agreement begin. Developer takes the site and project permitting begins.	
Mid-Term Tasks (3-7 Years)			
	Possible construction completion.	Disposition of property to selected developer; construction begins.	City completes the design of subsurface infrastructure.
Long-Term Tasks (7-10 Years)			
Possible construction completion.		Possible construction completion.	City's subsurface infrastructure work is complete. City's streetscape improvements begin.

ONGOING TASKS

In addition to the phased redevelopment of the sites outlined above, the SRA and City staff will need to pursue the following activities on an ongoing basis.

- City staff will incentivize the creation of a business association or other district management entity to facilitate collaboration among local businesses, contribute to the district's sense of identity, and to raise and manage funds that can be spent as the community sees fit on events, promotional endeavors, or items like planters and benches.
- City staff will continue to provide technical assistance to existing businesses and new businesses in the district, working to ensure a mix of businesses providing different goods and services and representing different cultures and backgrounds.
- The SRA and City staff will work with developers and existing property owners throughout the tenant selection process to ensure that business mix meets basic neighborhood needs (like pharmacies and grocery stores) and provides offerings at a variety of price points.
- City staff will monitor commercial rents and keep in close contact with existing business owners to prevent as much as possible the boutiquification of existing business offerings in the neighborhood.
- City staff and the SRA will monitor the results of this Plan in the neighborhood to determine how its initiatives affected the neighborhood and whether goals were achieved. This may require additional work beyond the time frame of this plan.

12.02(12) Financial Plan

COSTS

This section provides cost estimates for key components of the Plan. The SRA and the City of Somerville Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development (OSPCD) have a long track record implementing complex and comprehensive urban redevelopment projects utilizing a variety of tested and creative financing mechanisms. Advancing the Winter Hill Urban Renewal Project will require an approach that includes a mix of private developer financing and contributions, Federal & Commonwealth grant sources, district-based public finance tools and municipal debt. This is the same approach that the SRA and the City have used to transform Assembly Square and Union Square, the two most recent urban renewal projects in Somerville.

Although the SRA and the City intend to take D1 and D2 in the short-term, the expectation is that the SRA would not take D3 until a developer partner is selected. This developer would ideally be able to negotiate a purchase of D3, only requiring the SRA's use of eminent domain if a private sale is not reached, and be responsible for demolition. Table 12:1 describes the projected plan costs.

Table 12:1 - Projected Plan Costs

Action	Estimated Cost	Resources Secured	Possible Funding Sources
ACQUISITION			
Land Acquisition	$6,269,100		1, 2c
Appraisals	$14,000	$14,000	2b
Legal	$500,000		1, 2c
Subtotal:	*$6,783,100*		
RELOCATION			
Relocation Plan	$25,000	$25,000	2b
Relocation Consultant	$100,000		1, 2c
Relocation Payments	$1,200,000		1, 2c
Subtotal:	*$1,225,000*		
DEMOLITION			
Demolition	$600,000		1
Subtotal:	*$600,000*		
PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS			

Action	Estimated Cost	Resources Secured	Possible Funding Sources
Sewer Separation	$17,000,000		2d, 4b
Broadway Streetscape Improvement	$10,000,000		4b, 4a, 4d, 4c, 3c, 3b
Subtotal:	*$27,000,000*		
CONSULTANTS			
Environmental Assessments	$60,000	$60,000	3a
Real Estate Advisors	$100,000	$100,000	2b
Subtotal:	*$160,000*		
ADMINISTRATIVE			
Legal	$100,000		2a
Administration/Staff	$200,000		2a
Fees	$100,000		2b
Subtotal:	*$400,000*		
Contingency (20%)	$5,400,000		
Total Estimated Costs:	**$41,668,100**	**$260,000**	**2b, 3a**
Total Estimated Funding Required:	**$41,408,100**		

FINANCING MECHANISMS

There are several financing mechanisms the SRA and the City expects to rely on in the implementation of this Plan:

1. **Private developer financing and contributions:** Some activities, including demolition and redevelopment, are expected to be funded by private developers.

2. **Municipal funding sources**

    a. **In-kind Support:** The City can use existing budget or in-kind funding to support many of the identified public actions. This can include staff support on SRA actions or transfers of funds as allocated by the City Council.

    b. **Winter Hill Stabilization Fund:** The City Council has allocated $200,000 to a fund dedicated for the preparation and administration of this Plan.

    c. **General obligation debt:** The City can use bonds or loans to secure additional funding as needed for the public actions proposed in this plan.

d. **Water/sewer enterprise debt:** The City's Water & Sewer Enterprise Fund can fund related improvements.

3. Federal

   a. **EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant:** The City of Somerville has managed several Assessment Grants awarded by the EPA, and can use this funding to conduct Phase I Environmental Site Assessments of acquisition parcels to identify any environmental concerns and to conduct hazardous material assessments to ensure demolition handles any lead, asbestos, or other hazardous materials appropriately.

   b. **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG):** This federal program can be used for revitalizing blighted and decadent area or for housing, community, and economic development projects that assist low- and moderate-income residents.

   c. **Economic Development Administration Programs:** This federal agency provides assistance through different programs, including the Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Program, which can be used for construction and technical assistance on economic development projects.

4. **State**

   a. **MassWorks Infrastructure Financing:** This state program can provide funding to support activities like design, construction, and reconstruction to public infrastructure projects that support and accelerate housing production, spur private development, and create jobs throughout the Commonwealth.

   b. **District Improvement Financing (DIF):** Through this program, a city can designate a development district. As the district is developed, its tax revenues are channeled into paying for the infrastructure necessary to support that development.

   c. **23L:** Under this system, the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency would issue bonds to fund infrastructure improvements in a defined development zone. These bonds are paid back by assessments on the property within that zone.

   d. **Infrastructure Investment Incentive Program (I-Cubed):** Through this program, MassDevelopment issues bonds to invest in a public

infrastructure project. The debt service on the bonds is payable from contract assistance payments secured by a general obligation pledge of the Commonwealth. A cost and risk sharing agreement is arranged between the Commonwealth, the Municipality, and the private developer.

In addition, following are other grants, incentives, and programs the SRA, City, and developer partners may explore in order to implement this Plan.

- HUD Section 108 Loan: The Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program (Section 108) provides communities with a source of low-cost, long-term financing for economic and community development projects.
- Federal Highway Administration's Transportation Enhancement Program: This program can be used to pay for provision of pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- Massachusetts Department of Transportation Chapter 90 Funding: These funds can support roadway construction, preservation and improvement projects.
- The New Markets Tax Credits Program: The Project Area is located in a tract eligible for this tax credit program, which provides a tax credit to investors of projects in low-income areas.
- Massachusetts Parkland Acquisition and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant Program: These programs can provide grants up to $400,000 to acquire parkland, build a new park, or to renovate an existing park.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF): This fund can provide up to 50% of the total project cost for the acquisition, development, and renovation of parks to eligible communities.
- Urban Revitalization Development Grant (URDG): Provides grants to assist in the implementation of state approved urban renewal projects. It makes grant awards to municipalities of up to 50% of net project costs and is paid in twenty equal annual installments.

STATEMENT OF DIRECT/INDIRECT INTEREST

No member of the SRA nor the Somerville Planning Board and no employee or officer of the City of Somerville has, or is believed to have, any direct or indirect interest in any parcel to be acquired under this Winter Hill Urban Renewal Plan.

12.02(13) Citizen Participation

INTRODUCTION

The City of Somerville and the SRA are determined to facilitate meaningful public engagement in the implementation of this Urban Renewal Plan. Staff, SRA members, community members, and elected officials have discussed strengths and weaknesses of previous renewal efforts in an attempt to ensure more effective and meaningful collaboration in the pursuit of our shared vision for Winter Hill. This section of the Plan describes both citizen participation that has already occurred and prescribes the process for the disposition of the D3 site.

WINTER HILL NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

The foundation of this Plan is the Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan, which was the culmination of a thorough community engagement process following the City's "Outreach - Dialogue - Decide - Implement" approach, as opposed to the more traditional "Decide - Announce - Defend" model. The planning process for Winter Hill included a project kickoff, visioning meetings, a three-day charette, and an open house showcasing the plan in progress.

The community involvement did not end in planning, but continued into implementation. During the plan creation process, the City partnered with Team Better Block and many community residents and businesses to host a Winter Festival across the street from the Project Area. Since then, the City has hosted numerous community meetings to discuss plan priorities like the Healey School playground, Foss Park, and business supports.

EXPLORATION OF URBAN RENEWAL

As the Star Market site remained vacant, the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development (OSPCD), restarted the conversation about urban renewal in the neighborhood. Although this had been a subject of discussion previously, City staff wanted to understand the community appetite for the prospect of using eminent domain on the site and whether there was interest in using urban renewal on other opportunity sites as identified in the Neighborhood Plan. These meetings are summarized in full at SomerVoice.SomervilleMA.gov, but a brief overview follows.

- June 19, 2019 - Community Meeting: OSPCD presented to a room of ninety people a status update of the Star Market site, and explained how urban

renewal and demonstration projects could help with the site. An exit survey asked participants to vote whether they'd prefer to wait for private development, pursue an urban renewal plan, or pursue a demonstration project plan. The overwhelming support was for a demonstration project plan, but further legal research indicates that this tool would ultimately be inadvisable for a site that would require taking multiple parcels.

Results from the June 19, 2019 meeting.

- December 17, 2019 - Community Meeting: OSPCD held another meeting in the neighborhood, which drew out approximately forty-five people. Staff explained why the demonstration project was no longer a viable strategy, and asked if, knowing that, whether community members would prefer urban renewal or not pursuing action on the site. Participants engaged in a lively discussion about different community priorities and the pros and cons of urban renewal in the neighborhood. Staff asked participants to vote on their interest in an urban renewal plan and, if a plan were to be pursued, which sites should be included. Not everyone present voted, but 88% of those who did supported an urban renewal plan. This chart of voting was then used in subsequent meetings to allow others to vote on the same questions.

Results from 2019-2020 meetings regarding which sites to include in an urban renewal plan.

- Community Meetings: Following the December 2019 meeting, OSCPD staff hosted numerous meetings with the same information and voting mechanism in an effort to reach more community meetings. Staff also hosted office hours in the neighborhood, which enabled people to drop in for more low-key, informal conversations about urban renewal and the neighborhood in general. These meetings included the following:

    - December, 19, 2019 - Office Hours in Winter Hill
    - January 6, 2020 - Office Hours in Winter Hill
    - January 13, 2020 - Office Hours in Winter Hill with Haitian-Creole Interpretation
    - January 23, 2020 - Community Meeting with Portuguese Interpretation
    - February 3, 2020 - Community Meeting for Businesses and Property Owners
    - February 13, 2020 - Community Meeting with Spanish Interpretation
    - March 2, 2020 - Councilor Clingan's Community Meeting

In addition to these meetings, participants were invited to submit feedback and fill out a digital version of the survey on SomerVoice.SomervilleMA.gov. Many residents and businesses owners also reached out via email and phone, and the

opinions expressed in these formats were similarly recorded in the survey. City staff also walked through the neighborhood to chat with business owners and workers about the discussion and were invited to join a meeting with the Winter Hill Neighborhood Association to discuss further with residents about the project.

All in all, nearly 96 people participated in the conversation about urban renewal in Winter Hill, and 88% expressed an interest in using the tool. 90% of voters supported the Project Area being in the plan, more than any of the other opportunity sites presented.

Although the quantifiable support for the Plan is informative, the more qualitative feedback gathered over the course of these many meetings were perhaps more helpful in the long term. Below is a brief summary of some of the most salient common discussion points.

- **The scale of the Project Area:** Should the Plan focus on just Star Market? On Temple Square as a whole? On multiple opportunity sites highlighted in the Neighborhood Plan? Residents had different opinions on the matter.
- **The importance of supporting independent and minority-owned businesses:** The Project Area as proposed will disrupt business operations for multiple independent and minority-owned businesses. While Urban Renewal provides relocation benefits that may not exist in a private development, the community wanted to ensure the SRA does what it can to keep these businesses in Somerville.
- **The role of the Walgreens and fresh produce:** The community appreciates having a pharmacy and misses the fresh produce Star Market once provided. If possible, they would like to preserve and bring back these uses.
- **Height, use, and design of a redevelopment:** Since the intent of the community feedback was to determine whether to use urban renewal and not what to build through urban renewal, staff tried to steer away from debates about appropriate heights, exact programs of uses, or particular design considerations for possible redevelopments. However, it was clear that a future community process should take these matters into careful consideration.
- **If the SRA takes property, community uses and benefits are particularly important:** Urban renewal is a serious tool that must be wielded responsibly, and participants talked about the importance of maximizing what the community gets out of redevelopment, especially since public action is required.
- **The need for a good process that builds trust:** All stakeholders,

including community members, businesses, elected officials, and SRA members all agreed that a clear, fair process was needed to ensure continued community engagement in the urban renewal process. The SRA committed to include such a process in this Plan, although not explicitly required to do so by Massachusetts General Law. This process is described later in this chapter.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REGARDING THIS PLAN

The robust public process around the discussion of whether urban renewal is suitable in this neighborhood has provided ample insight into community concerns and desires that have influenced this Plan. The community will have further opportunity to weigh in on this Plan during its approval process through the following channels:

- By reviewing the draft Plan online and submitting comments through email.
- By speaking during the public comment period of SRA meetings.
- The City Council has indicated an interest in hosting a Public Meeting about this Plan, which will afford another opportunity for public comment.

Furthermore, the SRA would like to note that there remains an opportunity to expand the Project Area and add Acquisition Sites to this Plan in the future, which would allow the SRA to implement other aspects of the Neighborhood Plan. In order to do this, the SRA would pursue a major plan amendment, which would require the Plan to follow the same approval process needed for its initial acceptance by DHCD. This includes SRA approval, City Council approval, Planning Board approval, and, finally, approval by DHCD. These steps would provide ample opportunity for further discussion on these opportunity sites should the SRA decide to undertake this endeavor.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ON TEMPLE SQUARE

As previously stated, the disposition of D3, Temple Square, will be of particular importance to the community. Although the Neighborhood Plan provides some guidance on the general direction of the site, community members will be able to elaborate on this vision through discussions regarding possible site layout, design considerations, and the selection of a development partner.

The process is as follows:

- **Create a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC).** The purposes of this committee are to make decisions and interpretations regarding community input, to assist in sharing information with elected officials and other

stakeholders, and to provide recommendations to the SRA. The committee will include several community members, a City Councilor, a City staff person, and one or two members of the SRA.

- **Community Meetings:** Once the CAC is established, they will work with staff to organize several community meetings to discuss the Temple Square site. The object of these meetings is to develop consensus about the kind of project the community would like to see and the priorities in developer selection. OSPCD has already retained the services of a real estate advisory firm that has worked on similar projects to provide assistance in understanding the financial implications of different community benefits and helping stakeholders come to a vision that is advantageous to the neighborhood but still financially viable. The CAC will assist in strategizing about how to make these community meetings as well-attended as possible, with an emphasis on soliciting input from a diverse range of constituents. The CAC will also help identify when more meetings and outreach is needed, or when enough feedback has been gathered for the project to move forward.
- **Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Developers:** Once the CAC has identified priorities for a developer partner, OSPCD will prepare and the SRA will release a RFQ to solicit interested developers. The objective of this step is to identify a shortlist of developers who would be a good fit for the project based on community priorities. This could include the prioritization of women- or minority-owned firms, previous experience working in urban settings, and a proven track record of positive community relations. The CAC will assist in vetting possible candidates, and also share their impressions with the City Council to keep them informed of the process. Finally, they will present a recommendation to the SRA of which developers should be considered for the shortlist, and the SRA will make their decision.
- **Request for Proposals (RFP) for Projects:** Once a shortlist of developers is identified, staff will generate a RFP based on the CAC's interpretation of the community's vision for the project. Developers will submit specific, detailed proposals that respond to the community's vision. Similarly to the RFQ, the CAC will assist in vetting the submissions and share their impressions with the City Council. Then, they will present a recommendation to the SRA for their deliberation and final decision. Developers may submit alternatives to the program identified in the RFP, but the SRA reserves the right to decline all proposals if none are suitable.

In addition to this process, OSPCD and the SRA will continue working to ensure that relevant materials and information are available and accessible online.

12.02(14) Requisite Municipal Approvals

The SRA determined that the Renewal Area is a "Decadent Area" within the meaning of M.G.L. c.121B, § 1 at a meeting held on TKTK, TK, 2020.

The Somerville Planning Board met on TKTK, TK, 2020 and made a determination that the Winter Hill Urban Renewal Plan is based on a local survey and conforms to the comprehensive plan for the community (SomerVision 2040).

A public hearing on the Winter Hill Urban Renewal Plan was held on TKTK, TK, 2020 at Somerville City Hall. Notice of the public hearing was provided as required by law. Notice of the public hearing and a map indicating the area to be renewed was sent to the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

The Winter Hill Urban Renewal Plan was submitted to the Somerville City Council on TKTK, TK, 2020. The City Council voted X in favor, X opposed, X absent to approve the Winter Hill Urban Renewal Plan on TKTK, TK, 2020 and the plan was approved by the mayor on TKTK, TK, 2020.

12.02(15) Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)

TK

Appendix I: Equity Analysis

One of the implementation priorities of SomerVision 2040 is to incorporate an equity lens in how the City assesses development proposals. In addition to this mandate, a common theme in the outreach the City conducted regarding this project was to ensure that any urban renewal plan both maximizes the benefit to the community as well as ensures that benefits and burdens are borne equitably. As a result, this section of the plan, although not a requirement of an urban renewal plan, considers the equity impacts of pursuing an urban renewal plan in the Winter Hill neighborhood.

The Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity, developed by the Local and Regional Government Alliance on Race & Equity, provided a framework for this analysis.

PROPOSAL

As detailed in this Plan, the proposal is to establish an Urban Renewal Area in Winter Hill, focusing specifically on Temple Square. The key strategies in this proposal, as listed in the Objectives Chapter, are:

- Improve Winter Hill's identity as a neighborhood-oriented main street commercial district.
- Create green and open gathering spaces to support community life and the environment.
- Ensure a pedestrian- and bike-friendly experience.
- Minimize displacement by building additional affordable housing.
- Pursue redevelopment that produces equitable outcomes in the neighborhood.
- Redevelop vacant and underutilized properties into uses that better meet community needs.

The goals identified in the Objectives chapter are:

- Provide at least 40 net new jobs, at least 200 new housing units, including at least 40 new affordable housing units, to provide employment and housing opportunities for Somerville residents of all socio-economic levels and to bring a stronger customer base to existing businesses. The proposed renewal will eliminate three rental housing units and three businesses which employ an estimated thirty jobs total; displaced parties are entitled to relocation assistance and payments established under M.G.L. c. 79A and 760

CMR 27.00.

- Create at least an additional .5 acres of publicly accessible open, green space.
- Ensure that 25% of Temple Square is permeable surface.
- Develop in partnership with the Citizen Advisory Committee a community engagement strategy that will gather feedback from residents, workers, and other stakeholders from different races, cultures, and socioeconomic levels. This strategy will need to contend with the realities of COVID-19 and identify how to measure success.
- Add enough new housing and commercial development into the neighborhood to lessen the increase in rental prices that will likely result from the Green Line station's arrival compared to other station areas.
- Increase the revenues of existing businesses in the Winter Hill commercial district.
- Preserve the pharmacy use in Temple Square and, if possible, add fresh produce availability in the neighborhood.

DATA

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

The parties most directly affected by this Plan are the businesses and residential tenants who would be displaced as a result of urban renewal, as well as the property owners of the acquisition parcels. Those displaced will receive relocation benefits, which includes assistance finding a new space and financial support to cover the move, but regardless the displacement is a significant disruption. Low commercial and residential vacancy rates throughout the city make finding a new location, specifically one at an affordable rate for the long-term, a difficult task.

This Plan will also affect the Winter Hill neighborhood more generally, as developing these blighted sites will change the character of the commercial district and may increase the value of adjacent land. The Winter Hill neighborhood is a diverse one, with 37% of residents born outside of the United States, predominantly from Central America, Asia, South America, and the Caribbean. Winter Hill also has a higher share of Black and Latinx residents than Somerville as a whole. Beyond racial, ethnic, and nativity considerations, the residents of Winter Hill are also diverse in terms of class. While households on the southwestern side of Broadway have a median income of $94,907—more than the median income of Somerville as a whole—households on the northeastern side of Broadway have a median income of $58,298. This northeastern tract is also home to the Mystic View, Mystic River, and St. Polycarp affordable housing developments.

More broadly, the Plan will also affect Somerville as a whole. By creating additional housing near a transit stop, this proposal will add much-needed housing supply into the market with a minimum amount of displacement and a new customer base for existing businesses throughout the commercial district. Furthermore, this development will provide residential and commercial tax revenue to make necessary infrastructure improvements in the neighborhood and to support the City's financial health more broadly. Although the exact design of the project is subject to the community process, the Neighborhood Plan calls for a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development which meets the goals in the community-written Comprehensive Plan, SomerVision.

EXISTING INEQUITIES

All of the historic systemic inequities are at play here: residents have faced unequal access to housing and capital over centuries. Racial minorities in America endure a wealth gap and an education gap compared to their white peers, which has lasting, intergenerational effects on health, wealth, and opportunity. Over a third of Winter Hill residents are nonwhite, and thus have dealt with the burden of these unjust systems over generations.

In addition, much of the Winter Hill residents are foreign-born, which brings into play another set of burdens to contend with. Many immigrants face xenophobia, the uncertainty of changes in immigration policies, limited access to social services, and the fear of deportation for themselves or their loved ones. According to Census data, approximately 10% of Winter Hill residents do not speak English well, which can cause additional barriers to accessing social services or participating in civic life regardless of citizenship status.

This neighborhood has also borne the impacts of highways like McGrath and I-93, which emit ultrafine particulates that cause a variety of pulmonary and cardiac illnesses. The routing of 93 in particular cut through existing neighborhoods. Broadly, lower income communities of color tend to bear the brunt of highway-related pollution, and the proximity of significant affordable housing projects to the highway make this inequity particularly apparent in Somerville.

The major action of this proposal is redevelopment of a blighted site in the heart of Winter Hill. On the one hand, the redevelopment of this site will provide numerous benefits to the community—additional green space, new businesses, improved streetscape—and remove existing burdens—a crime-ridden property that exacerbates the heat island effect. However, such "improvement" is subjective, given that redevelopment can raise home values in the surrounding area. This would likely be welcome news for those who own their own homes, which is the case for 39% of Winter Hill households, but is more of a threat to renters. These

renters have already been paying a premium due to their proximity to the coming Green Line Station, according to the 2014 Dimensions of Displacement report. Rents could continue to climb, or some property owners may decide to convert their buildings to condos, allowing them to further cash in on the increase in value while tenants are likely displaced. Many of these dynamics are already in place, and redeveloping a dilapidated property will likely exacerbate them.

However, one benefit of the proposal is that it would likely bring two hundred or so housing units to the area, with 20% being affordable in perpetuity. At a time of gentrification in Winter Hill, this could bring much-needed supply into a high-demand area, which could soften the increase in rents. Although the proposal anticipates the displacement of three households, the net increase in available units may have an appreciable effect on the market in the neighborhood.

The exact plan for the redevelopment will be subject to a community process (described in this Plan under Citizen Participation), which will provide an opportunity to determine how the project can best support the community. For this process to be successful, it must be accessible to all members of the Winter Hill neighborhood. Every effort must be made to reach those who do not speak English, have easy access to the Internet, or who have a schedule that precludes participation in night meetings. No public engagement process is perfect, and not every household will have the interest or capacity to engage deeply in the months-long process, but a carefully designed approach can maximize the diversity of inputs.

AVAILABLE DATA

To assess the outcomes of this program, the City and the SRA can continue to look toward existing data sources.

Federal data sources include the U.S. Census Bureau, which can provide information about resident demographics, housing costs, and commuter patterns through the American Community Survey and Quarterly Workforce Indicators.

The City also has a number of datasets at its disposal. This includes the City's SomerVision Tracker, which counts new development; aggregated data about the Office of Housing Stability's clientele; and tree canopy data from the Urban Forestry Department. In addition, staff can also use GIS data available at the state and local level to measure changes in permeable surface and open space. To monitor the success of community engagement efforts, the City will need to collect new data about how residents have engaged online and in-person.

DATA GAPS

One major gap in the data is changes in rent and home values. Although online listings can provide some insight into housing prices, not all units are listed online and accessing and analyzing the data can require expert support. Furthermore, to test the results of whether new development can, in fact, mitigate rises in rental increases will require comparison to other neighborhoods and professional research. Despite these challenges, the data that is available should provide some insight into how the real estate market is changing over time.

Another gap exists in determining the health of surrounding businesses. Business owners tend to prefer not to openly share their revenues with outside parties. Staff can try to implement a survey to provide some insight into how businesses fare over time.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The decision to create this Plan came after several months of community engagement. This process included a variety of methods of engagement:

- **5 Public Meetings:** These included versions in Portuguese, Spanish, and English and were held in different locations and at different times of the day and week to maximize participation. One meeting, thanks to the efforts of community organizations, included activities for children. In general, these meetings included a presentation of relevant information, lengthy question and answer sessions, and an opportunity for dot voting on the key questions.
- **3 Office Hour Sessions:** City staff was available in the Winter Hill neighborhood for constituents to walk in and ask questions. One session was hosted with Haitian-Creole interpretation. These informal sessions gave the opportunity for small group or one-on-one discussions, and were a more comfortable environment for some participants.
- **Meeting with Neighborhood Association:** The Winter Hill Neighborhood Association invited City staff to join their monthly meeting to provide information and answer questions in a small-group format.
- **Ad Hoc Meetings:** City staff also met with business owners and property owners affected by the plan to ensure they were informed.
- **Online Engagement:** The City used the SomerVoice platform at SomerVoice.SomervilleMA.gov to share information and collect additional feedback.

The community engagement process was strong in terms of providing opportunities for engaged residents to participate and provide feedback to City staff, but it was less effective at connecting with residents who do not already regularly attend community meetings. Staff and community member observation

suggests that participants were mostly White, professional, civically-engaged renters and owners in the neighborhood.

There will be additional community engagement when this Plan is approved in order to decide on a developer and a project for the Acquisition Site, as described in the Citizen Participation chapter. The proposed community process aims to cater to two different categories—those who have the interest and capacity to play a large role in the process over the duration of the process, and those who do not, but are still stakeholders in the outcome of the process. Designing events and selecting engagement strategies that cater to the many different kinds of people in the latter category and overcome the barriers to participation they face will be a major challenge in the future community engagement process.

Some of the different constituencies affected by this proposal are described below.

- **Businesses and residents who would be displaced by the proposal.** Staff and elected officials worked with all businesses and residents who may be displaced as a result of this Plan, and some were quite involved with the initial community process. The businesses are all independent firms and mostly owned by people of color. As displaced renters, these individuals and entities are most directly affected by this Plan. However, as discussed in the Relocation chapter, displaced parties are entitled by law to relocation benefits. At minimum, these parties receive financial and technical assistance to help them relocate to comparable spaces. City staff and the SRA have already contracted with a relocation specialist to host an info session for potentially displaced entities to provide as much clarity about the process, their rights, and what to expect.
- **Property owners whose parcels would be acquired or otherwise included in the urban renewal plan.** The property owners of acquisition sites must be paid fair market value for their property at the time of taking, as prescribed by Massachusetts General Law. Although these owners will lose their properties, they will be appropriately compensated for their loss.
- **Direct abutters to acquisition sites.** The direct abutters appear to be a mix of renters and owners who will see a drastic change in their neighborhood as a result of this Plan. In some ways, some will benefit when the blighted, vacant property adjacent to them is redeveloped into a community amenity. However, renters may see their monthly housing costs increase, ultimately resulting in their displacement. Unlike those who are located on the acquisition sites, they are not entitled to any benefits. Meanwhile, homeowners will likely see their housing value rise.
- **Other business owners in the neighborhood.** The businesses owners

throughout the commercial district will likely experience benefits as well as burdens. The added customer base that new housing units will provide, combined with the construction workers necessary to build these units, will likely support revenues. However, if redevelopment on the Acquisition Site increases development pressure in the neighborhood, property owners may choose to redevelop or raise their rents. These business owners are racially and ethnically diverse, and cater to an equally diverse clientele, so technical assistance is important to help mitigate the burden and ensure they can make the most of the benefits redevelopment can offer.

- **Other residents in the neighborhood.** The neighborhood at large will benefit from the redevelopment of vacant, blighted land in the heart of the commercial district. However, the same burdens of abutters apply—renters may see their housing costs increase or may be displaced entirely if the owner decides to convert their building to condos. Somerville has strong condo conversion regulations that protect tenants in such situations, but ultimately renters will be more vulnerable to burdens and may not have the opportunity to appreciate the benefits of this Plan.

ANALYSIS, STRATEGIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION

Ultimately, the effects of this proposal will likely be mixed. Winter Hill is a racially and socioeconomically diverse neighborhood, and residents deserve to see the replacement of a run-down, crime-ridden property with terrific green community space and new commercial amenities that meet community needs. Continuing to wait for private action would be a disservice to the neighborhood, and would prevent it from having a quality of life comparable to other Somerville neighborhoods, including those that are more high-income.

However, with improvement comes real estate values that reflect that improvement. Welcome news for homeowners, certainly, but renters experience this phenomenon differently, in the form of rising housing costs or displacement when an owner converts their unit to a condo. Given that this proposal would see additional housing and commercial units in the neighborhood, there is a chance that rising costs would be tempered by such a significant increase in supply. Those who are interested in moving to Winter Hill will have hundreds of units to select from before that demand spilled over to existing rental units. The exact results will be subject to innumerable market forces, but approaching this proposal with the goal of increasing the benefits to all and minimizing the burdens to vulnerable populations like renters, people of color, and low-income families can move the needle.

The following strategies, incorporated in this Plan, can help increase racial and socioeconomic equity:

- **Keep the anti-displacement goal at the forefront.** The community process should emphasize this as an objective and encourage conversations about how best to wield redevelopment as a strategy towards this end. When a developer is selected, the City and the SRA should reiterate the values-based goals of this Plan and explore opportunities to preserve uses like the pharmacy while bringing in new uses like grocery that complement existing offerings. Developers should be partners in implementing the vision of this plan, not just the construction of a building.
- **Ensure neighborhood businesses and residents have access to information and assistance.** Staff should check in with existing businesses regularly, and promote technical assistance offerings heavily in the neighborhood. The Office of Housing Stability should promote relevant regulations, like the Condo Conversion Ordinance, to ensure residents know their rights and what resources are available to them. All community engagement, whether to businesses, residents, or other stakeholders, should be multilingual.
- **Explore how to best support displaced parties in the Relocation Plan.** As the community discusses community benefits desired as a part of this proposal, the benefits to displaced parties should be a consideration. Although there are state-mandated minimums for relocation benefits, the community could opt to provide additional supports paid for by the developer.
- **Be flexible and committed to high-quality community engagement in the design of the Temple Square project.** Some residents are eager to join a committee and provide their perspective on an ongoing basis throughout the course of the project; other residents may not be able to make it to a single night meeting. The community engagement for this project must cater to both, ensuring that everyone can have a say in the future of their neighborhood, regardless of whether they can or will participate in traditional engagement methods.
- **Build authentic community in the neighborhood.** One of Winter Hill's strengths is that it is an integrated community across racial and socioeconomic divisions. Events and programming—both through the City but also community organizers, churches, and neighborhood associations—can help build bridges among community members and make clear to newcomers that this diversity is an important part of Winter Hill's identity.
- **Approach urban renewal as an intervention.** This means committing to assessing outcomes throughout the process, as best as possible. Staff should not only explore how housing costs are ultimately affected compared to other neighborhoods receiving Green Line Stations, but also who uses the new green spaces and how the business landscape shifts.
- **Consider future opportunities to test new approaches.** This Plan focuses on Temple Square as a project area, but a future major plan

amendment could expand the project area to a larger geographic area. In the event this happens, the SRA should explore how to incorporate more tools to fight displacement. This may include reserving a right of first refusal for some properties, allowing the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund or mission-driven designee to purchase a property for affordable housing.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNICATION

The City and SRA will continue to strive to provide information and updates regarding this Plan online and through email updates. Once a Citizen Advisory Committee is formed, per the Citizen Participation chapter, the City will work with this committee to create community meetings as well as alternate engagement methods to maximize input into the project across different constituencies in the neighborhood. This Committee will also be tasked with deciding when enough community feedback has been gathered for a decision to be made. The SRA will also rely on this Committee to assist with identifying the most effective communication channels for the community—this may require working with churches, schools, and community leaders to supplement more traditional outreach methods.

In addition, the SRA and City Staff must plan for continued research on the effects of this Plan. Working with real estate experts to gather and analyze the appropriate data to determine the results of this project will require dedicated budget and forethought.

Appendix II: Preliminary Relocation Plan

SECTION A - NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE RELOCATION PROGRAM

The Somerville Redevelopment Authority (SRA) is proposing to undertake the Winter Hill Urban Renewal Plan ("The Plan") to remove decadent conditions on the Project Area, a 2.8 acre area in Somerville's Winter Hill neighborhood. Through this plan, the SRA will acquire, assemble, and convey land to developers for the purposes of creating residential and commercial buildings, as well as green open space.

These public actions will remove a burdensome vacant property, support the Winter Hill commercial district, provide needed housing with access to transit and implement key priorities identified in the Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan.

The Plan as currently proposed may involve the displacement of approximately 4 commercial occupants and 2 residential tenants located on 3 parcels of property that may be either acquired in total or in part. This preliminary relocation plan has been prepared exclusively for this project and outlines the anticipated relocation program and procedures that will be undertaken by the SRA in connection with its assistance to displaced occupants. This preliminary plan was based on review of existing data contained within the Plan. In keeping with generally accepted practices, this relocation plan may be amended and modified prior to project commencement. It is understood that the properties identified in the Plan for this project may change as the program evolves and until the actual properties to be acquired is more defined and the eventual timing of any property acquisitions is established that it is preferable for site occupants and property owners to wait on obtaining information from potentially displaced occupants for a later date. Eventual interviews with occupants and the information obtained from such interviews will be added to the relocation plan as an addendum and will subsequently be submitted to the Massachusetts Bureau of Relocation for review, consideration and approval.

All relocation activities will comply with applicable state and federal regulations and will be supported by a relocation plan prepared in accordance with applicable federal and state requirements, including the requirements of 760 CMR 27.00, Relocation Assistance Regulations. No displacement will occur until a relocation plan has been finalized and approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (DHCD)'s Bureau of Relocation.

All eligible lawful occupants determined by the SRA to be displaced as a result of the property acquisition for this project will be provided relocation assistance and payments pursuant to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970, as amended; 42 U.S.C. Section 4601 et seq.; and the applicable implementing regulations set forth in Title 49, Part 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations (together the "Uniform Act"). In addition, the SRA will adhere to the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 79A, and 760 Code of Massachusetts Regulations, Part 27.00. In any instances where the SRA determines that there is a conflict between federal or state laws and/or regulations, with respect to relocation payments or benefits to eligible displaced occupants, the SRA will make every effort to apply the requirements of whichever law or regulation provides the greater benefit to the displaced occupant.

The SRA will seek designation as the relocation advisory agency for this project and will be responsible for providing required relocation assistance and payments to persons displaced due to this project. This designation will be updated in consultation with the Bureau of Relocation. The SRA will retain the services of independent professionals with experience in implementing the Uniform Act to provide comprehensive assistance to displaced persons and businesses. In addition, the SRA will work closely with local real-estate brokers and appraisers, state and local officials to ensure that any adverse impact of displacement on the affected occupants is minimized.

During the relocation process, the SRA will provide ongoing information relative to available space, assistance programs including, but not limited to, small business loan programs and other data that may be useful to displaced occupants. A number of businesses may require assistance from the City of Somerville with respect to licenses and other approvals. Historically, municipal agencies are available to assist any business displaced due to public action in this regard. In addition, experienced commercial real estate brokers will be enlisted to be available to any affected occupants in order to assess potentially suitable replacement locations in a timely and cost effective manner.

The City of Somerville will also be available to work with occupants in an effort to retain displaced businesses in the City. If appropriate, financial incentives will be made available for activities in Community Development Block Grant-eligible areas. There can also be consideration for incentive payments through relocation benefits that may be available and which are discussed further within this plan.

SECTION B. - DISPLACEMENT NUMBER

Approximately 4 business concerns and 2 residential tenants may be relocated as part of the redevelopment project. An inventory is provided below: The names of all lawful eligible occupants will be confirmed prior to and/or as a part of undertaking tenant interviews.

Inclusion of occupants on this list does not establish eligibility for relocation assistance or benefits and is subject to change or review depending upon the eventual accepted plan to acquire property for demolition.

Parties Potentially Requiring Relocation

Parcel ID	Address	Name	Type
70-D-5 and 70-D-27	15 Temple	Walgreens	Pharmacy
70-D-24	311-313 Broadway	Brazilian Times	Newspaper
70-D-24	311-313 Broadway	Winter Hill Liquors	Liquor Store
70-D-25	9 Temple St	Elegancia	Barber Shop
70-D-25	9 Temple St #2	Resident	
70-D-25	9 Temple St #3	Resident	

SECTION C - ESTIMATED DATE OF DISPLACEMENT

It is anticipated that acquisition of property will occur in 2024. However, the exact timing of displacement is dependent on the developer's construction schedule. Possible site plans may allow for phased development, which would allow occupants to remain on site longer. More detail on timing of displacement will be included in the subsequent relocation plan to be prepared as required under G.L. 79A.

SECTION D - SITE OCCUPANT NEEDS

As noted above, site occupant surveys have not been undertaken at this time due to the fact that site occupants may change between now and the point in the future when acquisition of property and relocation of occupants may occur. In addition, when it is determined when property acquisition may take place, all occupants will be asked to meet with SRA staff or consultants to prepare a site occupant survey. The site occupant survey will determine the needed number of square feet, space layout, maximum rent, and any specific needs. For business occupants who own real estate, if applicable, would also include the needed

number of square feet, space layout, maximum price, maximum carrying cost, and any specific needs. SRA plans to conduct meetings with affected occupants in the fall to provide an overall understand of the relocation process and will, at that time, obtain some information that will be used within the anticipated amendment to this plan. Outreach to the community, included affected occupants, is of high importance to the SRA and staff and consultants will make themselves available on an on-going basis to address any and all concerns expressed by potentially affected occupants and other stakeholders to ensure that the purposes of the relocation regulations, as specified within 760 CMR 27.00 are followed, such as location and parking requirements.

It is intended that the SRA will continue to meet with site occupants over the course of the relocation process to update information pertaining to their relocation needs. A comprehensive record of each eligible occupant's relocation needs will be maintained within the site occupant record and will be updated as required.

For larger commercial concerns, the SRA will work closely with any corporate entity to assist in following any established procedures they may have in place with respect to opening new locations. Of obvious concern with Walgreens, for example, would be any particular needs and requirements associated with lease obligations and construction of secure pharmacy dispensing facilities.

For the residential tenants to be displaced, of particular importance will be adherence to the requirement that no occupant will be required to vacate until at least one (1) suitable replacement dwelling has been located and provided and that all benefits are calculated with the intent to ensure that any displaced resident is re-housed in accordance with established procedures.

SECTION E - COMMERCIAL MARKET REVIEW

In order to plan for the proper and successful relocation of potentially affected occupants, SRA staff and its consultants will review commercial real-estate listings in the downtown area and throughout Somerville. This review will provide a general overview of the range of properties on the market or available for lease and/or sale.

Commercial properties will be identified through experienced real estate brokers and various real estate publications including on-line advertisements. The SRA and its consultants will work closely with business owners, brokers, landlords and property owners to find suitable replacement locations.

Presently, it is anticipated that commercial occupants identified within this

relocation plan will be able to find suitable replacement locations if provided adequate time and resources. Of course, as the relocation efforts come more into focus with respect to timing and phasing of any relocation activities of potentially affected occupants, a detailed review of the commercial market will be reviewed and any findings will be submitted as part of a relocation plan addendum.

SECTION F - ESTIMATED COST OF RELOCATION

The total cost of relocation for this project is estimated to be between $950,000 and $1,200,000. Actual costs will depend, of course, on many factors unknown at this time, including increases in rental market rates, unforeseen expenses to reconnect personal property and the condition of available suitable replacement locations.

SECTION G - DESCRIPTION OF FUNDING SOURCES

For determining relocation benefits available to affected occupants, all funding will result in benefits available in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Act and MGL c. 79A.

SECTION H - ASSURANCE STATEMENT

The relocation assistance program and the relocation payments provided by the SRA will comply with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 79A of as most recently amended by Chapter 863 of the Acts of 1973, and with the regulations contained in 760 CMR 27.00. A signed assurance statement from the head of the SRA will be forwarded to the Bureau of Relocation with the final relocation plan.

SECTION I - CONCURRENT PROJECTS

Currently, there are no other land acquisition activities under way or planned by other governmental agencies in the immediate downtown Somerville vicinity. Therefore, the SRA does not anticipate the need to coordinate the relocation of occupants for this project with other governmental agencies.

SECTION J - REAL/PERSONAL PROPERTY REPORT

Real-estate appraisals will be prepared for the properties scheduled for acquisition. The appraisers involved will be notified by the SRA that the appraisals must clearly distinguish items of property that are part of the real estate from items that are personal property and eligible for relocation assistance. Appraisers will be provided with the definition of personal property that is contained in MGL 79A, Section 1. The SRA will review the appraisals to verify that the

personal property is clearly and consistently delineated. If there are discrepancies between the appraisal reports, the SRA will meet with the appraisers in order to clarify these discrepancies. Tenants and/or owners will be involved, as necessary. Furthermore, the relocation plan requires site occupants to prepare and submit an inventory of personal property. The SRA will check the inventory against the real-estate appraisal reports. If there are discrepancies, the SRA will meet with the occupants and/or the appraisers in order to resolve any disputes.

SECTION K - TEMPORARY MOVES AND OTHER POLICIES

1) Temporary Moves. Temporary moves will be kept to a minimum and will be used only in emergency situations and as a temporary resource for a limited period of time when permanent relocation resources are not immediately available. Temporary relocation costs will include only eligible expenses and will not include rent or real estate improvements at the temporary location. Any temporary move with a duration of six months or more will be considered a permanent move.

2) Use-and-Occupancy Agreement. Any tenant and/or owner occupying acquired property will be required to execute a use-and-occupancy agreement within 45 days of acquisition. The agreement will stipulate the terms and conditions for occupancy.

Use-and-occupancy charges for commercial tenants will be set in relation to fair-market value for such use and occupancy and set no higher than rent paid upon acquisition, except that fees may be increased to cover the cost of providing services rendered plus any municipal taxes and water and sewer bills. Use-and-occupancy agreements also will stipulate that any unpaid use-and-occupancy charges to be withheld from the occupant's relocation payment. Other provisions of the agreement will include:

a. Use-and-occupancy fee to be charged

b. Starting date of occupancy

c. Date on which payments will be due

d. Date on which the fee will begin to accrue

e. Identification of utilities or services to be furnished by either party

f. Rights of tenant to pro rata refund of advance use-and-occupancy fees in event of a move before the end of a rental period.

3) Fixed Payment in Lieu of Moving Benefit. The SRA may determine that it would be beneficial to business concerns to be displaced for this project if the SRA made some adjustments and/or clarifications to the Fixed Payment in Lieu of Moving Benefit available to such businesses. To that end, the SRA will apply the following policies: First, all businesses that elect to apply for the benefit will be assumed to meet the requirement that they have experienced a loss of patronage. Secondly, documentation required to support average net earnings will consist of a signed statement from the business certifying earnings. Copies of tax records will not be required. Thirdly, businesses that file for a relocation payment based upon the Fixed Payment in Lieu of Moving benefit will not be prohibited from filing a claim for supplemental incentive payments as determined by the SRA

4) Claim Forms. All displaced occupants will be provided with copies of the required relocation claim forms and will be offered assistance in completing them. All occupants who seek any relocation payment must file the appropriate claim form and will be advised in advance as to the documentation required to support any relocation claims made. Failure to file relocation claim forms with the SRA within the time period specified in the applicable relocation regulations will be grounds for denial of requested relocation payments.

5) Advisory Services. The SRA will be available to provide necessary assistance and advisory services to occupants displaced by this project. These services will include, but not be limited to, referrals to real estate and rental agents, move planners, financial advisors, and suitable government programs. However, with regard to displaced commercial entities, the SRA is not obligated to provide any displaced occupant with a referral to a replacement location that replicates or provides the displaced business with a competitive advantage it may currently have due to the occupancy terms at its present location.

6) Incentive Payments. The SRA may elect to implement a program which provides incentive payments to businesses displaced as part of the Plan but who agree to remain within the City of Somerville and move from acquired property within an expedited period of time. Any such incentive payments will be made available uniformly to all affected occupants and would not otherwise result in a reduction of relocation benefits and assistance that would otherwise be available within proscribed and applicable laws and regulations.

7) Confidentiality. Material and information collected from affected occupants during the relocation process will, to whatever extent is permissible within applicable laws and ordinances, be kept confidential. Files and records prepared by

the relocation consultant will be turned over to the displacing agency upon final payment of relocation claims.

SECTION L. SUMMARY OF APPEAL PROCEDURES

Any claimant aggrieved by a SRA determination as to the amount or eligibility of a relocation payment or the claimant's eligibility to receive a relocation payment may request further SRA review. The request will include the following information: name and address of the displacee; reference to SRA notice and specific amount of claim denied or partially approved; any information and/or documentation that may be pertinent to the claim; and a request for SRA information relative to the claim, if not provided in the determination. This request for further review must be submitted within 60 days from the date the occupant receives written notice of a final determination by the SRA

1) SRA Hearing. The SRA governing board, at one of its regularly scheduled meetings, will schedule a hearing to be conducted by a SRA board member in order to provide an opportunity for the aggrieved claimant and SRA representatives to present oral and/or written arguments.

2) Decision. Within 30 days following the hearing, the SRA will render a written decision as to the amount or eligibility of the claim with an explanation of the reasons supporting the decision. The decision will include information on the claimant's option to request review of the decision by the Bureau of Relocation. The decision will be sent to the claimant by certified mail, return-receipt requested. If the claimant does not request review of the decision by the Bureau of Relocation within 30 days of receipt of the decision, the SRA decision will be final.

3) Review by the Bureau of Relocation. Bureau of Relocation policies and procedures are found in the state Relocation Assistance Regulations, 760 CMR 27.00. Claimants may contact the Relocation Bureau Director, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Housing and Community Development, 100 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA 02114, (617) 573-1400.

Appendix III: Additional Reports & Plans

Winter Hill Windshield Environmental Assessment

Winter Hill Neighborhood Plan

SomerVision 2030

Appendix III:
Somerville Redevelopment Authority Vote

TK

Appendix IV: City Council Vote

Appendix V: Planning Board Vote

Appendix V: Certification of SRA Counsel